



**HINDUS IN SOUTH ASIA
AND THE DIASPORA:**

**A Survey of
Human Rights**
2007



**HINDU
AMERICAN
FOUNDATION**

Hindus in South Asia and the Diaspora:

A Survey of Human Rights

2007



www.HAFsite.org

May 19, 2008

“All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights”

(Universal Declaration of Human Rights, 1948, Article 1)

***“Religious persecution may shield itself under
the guise of a mistaken and over-zealous piety”***

(Edmund Burke, February 17, 1788)

Endorsements of the Hindu American Foundation's 3rd Annual Report

“Hindus in South Asia and the Diaspora: A Survey of Human Rights 2006”

I would like to commend the Hindu American Foundation for publishing this critical report, which demonstrates how much work must be done in combating human rights violations against Hindus worldwide. By bringing these abuses into the light of day, the Hindu American Foundation is leading the fight for international policies that promote tolerance and understanding of Hindu beliefs and bring an end to religious persecution.

Senator Sherrod Brown (D-OH)

Freedom of religion and expression are two of the most fundamental human rights. As the founder and former co-chair of the Congressional Caucus on India, I commend the important work that the Hindu American Foundation does to help end the campaign of violence against Hindus in South Asia. The 2006 human rights report of the Hindu American Foundation is a valuable resource that helps to raise global awareness of these abuses while also identifying the key areas that need our attention.

Congressman Frank Pallone, Jr. (D-NJ)

Several years ago in testimony to Congress regarding Religious Freedom in Saudi Arabia, I called for adding Hindus, Sikhs and Buddhists to oppressed religious groups who are banned from practicing their religious and cultural rights in Saudi Arabia. This report is a great effort in bringing to attention the religious rights and freedoms of 1 billion people with magnificent culture and a great civilization. I wish to see this effort expand further to include cultural awareness in the Persian Gulf countries and the Muslim Middle East of Hinduism, the largest religion and closest geographically to the region, but is severely misunderstood.

**Ali Al-Ahmed
Director, Institute for Gulf Affairs**

We join with representatives of diverse religious and ethnic groups, policymakers and community leaders alike, in recognizing the important efforts of the Hindu American Foundation to regularly and extensively monitor, analyze and promote awareness of human rights problems, particularly those affecting Hindus around the world, and to propose means to improvement. We share a vital commitment to protecting the fundamental rights of Hindus, as those of every person, and to combating all forms of bigotry and discrimination. HAF's contribution in this regard is certainly to be commended.

**David J. Michaels
Director of Intercommunal Affairs, B'nai B'rith International**

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The **Hindu American Foundation (HAF)** is a human rights group whose purpose is to provide a voice for the 2 million Hindu Americans in the United States. HAF interacts with and educates government, media, think tanks, academia and public fora about Hinduism and issues of concern to Hindus locally and globally. Promoting the Hindu and American ideals of understanding, tolerance and pluralism, HAF stands strong against hate, discrimination, defamation and terror. The Hindu American Foundation is not affiliated with any religious or political organizations or entities. HAF seeks to serve Hindu Americans across all sampradayas (Hindu religious traditions).

Acknowledgements

This is the fourth of our annual Hindu human rights reports. As in the past, numerous grass-roots organizations were involved in collecting data about the violation of human rights of Hindu minorities, and we thank them for sharing the information they have collected. Chief among these organizations are the Bangladesh Hindu, Buddhist, Christian Unity Council (BHBCUC) – which provided us with critical data of the daily violence against the Hindu minority in Bangladesh; Human Rights Congress for Bangladesh Minorities (HRCBM) – an organization that has been at the forefront of publicizing the plight of Hindus in Bangladesh; Indo-American Kashmir Forum and the Kashmir Taskforce – both have worked to bring the attention of the United States government and media to the plight of Kashmiri Hindus; Panun Kashmir – working hard to recover the lost properties and homes of Hindus forced to leave the Kashmir valley; Hindu Rights Action Force – working for the human rights of Hindu minorities in Malaysia; Global Human Rights Defense (GHRD) – seeking to educate European media and government about the status of human rights worldwide; and South Asia Human Rights Documentation Centre (SAHRDC) – which keeps track of human rights abuses in South Asia.

We acknowledge the work of global human rights organizations – Amnesty International, Freedom House, and Human Rights Watch – in bringing to our attention the denial of human rights around the world. Also, important historical information and contemporary updates were obtained from the U.S. Department of State’s annual reports on religious freedom and human rights, and the United States Commission on International Religious Freedom’s (USCIRF) annual reports.

HAF is indebted to the volunteers who have given their time and talents to contribute to this report. These include Rajit Das, who was instrumental in compiling the report on Russia, Rathi Srinivas who compiled the report on Malaysia and Bhutan, and Executive Council members Ishanaa Rambachan and Samir Kalra.

Hindus in South Asia and the Diaspora: A Survey of Human Rights – 2007

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The human rights of Hindu citizens are consistently violated in ten countries and one state in India where Hindus constitute a minority: Bangladesh, Bhutan, Fiji, the Indian state of Jammu and Kashmir, Malaysia, Pakistan, Russia, Saudi Arabia, Sri Lanka, and Trinidad and Tobago. This report documents the ongoing violations of human rights in these countries.

HINDUS ACROSS THE DIASPORA

- Hindus, with a population of over one billion, are the third largest religious group in the world.
- Hinduism is one of the oldest surviving religions and its origins can be traced back to at least the third millennium BCE.
- Hindus are pluralistic in their beliefs, and accept the myriad means of worship and prayer available to human beings seeking spiritual enlightenment.
- Hindus in South Asia and many of the twenty million Hindus living outside of India are subject to discrimination, terror, murder and other forms of violence, forced conversions, ethnic cleansing, temple destruction, socio-political ostracization and disenfranchisement. In some countries, fundamentalists from other religions advance a discriminatory and non-inclusive agenda and promote hatred of religious and ethnic minorities in league with politicians and other government officials.

PEOPLE’S REPUBLIC OF BANGLADESH

- In 1947, Hindus constituted nearly 30% of Bangladesh’s population. By 1991, twenty million Hindus were “missing” from Bangladesh. Today, Hindus comprise less than 10% of the population.
- Hindus of Bangladesh continue to be victims of ethnic cleansing waged by Islamic fundamentalists that include daily acts of murder, rape, kidnappings, temple destruction, and physical intimidation.
- Human rights activists and journalists are frequently harassed and abused in Bangladesh.

- At least 270 acts of murder, rape, kidnappings, temple destruction, and land grab targeting Hindus are recorded in this report for the six months in 2007 for which data is available.
- Nearly 1.2 million or 44% of the 2.7 million Hindu households in the country were affected by the Enemy Property Act 1965 and its post-independence version, the Vested Property Act 1974. Individuals with direct ties to the Bangladesh National Party (BNP)-Islamist party alliance in power between 2001 and 2006 were beneficiaries of over 45% of lands confiscated from Hindus under the draconian Vested Property Act.

HAF Recommendations:

- 1) The interim Bangladesh government must continue to take substantial and verifiable measures to ensure that attacks on Hindus and their institutions cease, and bring to quick justice those political and radical religious elements who have led the assault on Hindus and other minorities.
- 2) Bangladesh must repeal the anti-minority and racist laws such as the Vested Property Act. Confiscated lands must be restored to the rightful, original owners.
- 3) Bangladesh should set up a Human Rights Commission and a Minorities Commission to monitor the human rights situation and to provide redress to minority grievances.
- 4) The United States and other donor nations must demand accountability from the Bangladesh Government, and all aid to Bangladesh should be contingent on the improvement of the human rights situation.

KINGDOM OF BHUTAN

- Bhutan has been ruled by an absolute monarchy since 1907. The country has remained under the administrative control of the Buddhist theocratic leader Zhabdrung Ngawang Namgye.
- Bhutan is a multi-religious, multi-cultural, multi-ethnic, and multi-lingual society.
- Bhutan evicted over 100,000 Hindu minority and Nyingmapa Buddhists from southern and eastern Bhutan in the early 1990s.
- These more than 100,000 Bhutanese citizens, comprise nearly one sixth of the kingdom's total population of approximately 700,000, and have been forced to leave

or forcibly evicted from the country by the royal regime due to their religio-ethnic identity.

- Over 100,000 Bhutanese refugees are living in refugee camps in Nepal managed by the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR), while 20,000 other undocumented refugees are scattered outside the camps in Nepal and in several Indian states without any help or legal status.

HAF Recommendations:

- 1) Bhutan must take practical and concrete steps to demonstrate its stated commitment to a just resolution of the longstanding refugee crisis.
- 2) Bhutan, Nepal and the UNHCR should adopt a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) for voluntary repatriation that includes a clear statement of rights and entitlements upon the refugees' return to Bhutan - including full citizenship rights and human rights protections.
- 3) Donors, UN agencies and Bhutan's other partners should insist on measures to eliminate discrimination against the Hindu Lhotshampas who have remained in Bhutan since the exodus of refugees, and to ensure the protection of their fundamental human rights and their right to participate as full citizens of Bhutan.

REPUBLIC OF THE FIJI ISLANDS

- In Fiji, Hindus constitute approximately 34% of the Christian majority state.
- Fijian Hindus continue to face hate speech and Hindu temples continue to be targets of attack.
- The Methodist Church of Fiji has repeatedly called for the creation of a Christian State.
- It is encouraging that fewer attacks on Hindu temples and Hindus were recorded in 2007 compared to the previous years. Also encouraging is that after the installation of the new interim government on December 5, 2006 there has been a steady decline in attacks on Hindu temples.

HAF Recommendations:

- 1) The Fijian government must respect the rights of all citizens, and the inherent political bias against Hindus and ethnic Indians in that country must be eradicated.

- 2) Fiji should repeal the “Truth and Reconciliation” (TRC) Bill and successfully prosecute and punish the criminals of the 2000 coup.
- 3) Fiji must do more to protect Hindus from violence and hate speech. Furthermore, the government must safeguard Hindu temples from attacks.
- 4) The Fijian government must distance itself from Christian fundamentalists promoting hatred against Hindus and Hinduism, and avoid Christianization of its institutions.

INDIAN STATE OF JAMMU AND KASHMIR

- The Maharaja of Kashmir ceded his kingdom to India in 1947 when Pakistan invaded Kashmir in order to conquer the kingdom. Pakistan occupies about 35% of the region, India governs approximately half, and China occupies the remainder of the region including a portion ceded to it by Pakistan.
- India and Pakistan have fought major wars over Kashmir.
- Since the mid to late 1980s, Islamist terrorists from Pakistan and Afghanistan have targeted Kashmir and are guilty of massive ethnic cleansing of Hindus from India’s Kashmir valley.
- 300,000 Kashmiri Hindus are refugees in their own country, sheltered in temporary camps in Jammu and other parts of India.
- The year 2007 was marked by several terrorist attacks directed against Hindus by Pakistan supported terror groups. There has not been any significant amelioration in the status of Hindu refugees from Kashmir. They continue to be neglected by the Indian government and the state of Jammu and Kashmir.

HAF Recommendations:

- 1) Kashmiri Hindus must be allowed to return to their homes, must have their property restored to them, and must receive protection from the Indian government and the Kashmir state government.
- 2) Pakistan must permanently end its sponsorship of terror via direct military aid to terror groups, sponsorship of terror camps in Pakistan and covert support to terrorists by its ISI spy service.

MALAYSIA

- Malaysia is a self-declared Islamic Republic and Islam is the official religion of the country despite Malaysia being a multi-ethnic and multi-religious country in which Hindus, Christians and Buddhists are significant minorities. Minorities struggle to maintain and practice their religions.
- The right to religious freedom has been eroding. Ethnic Malays are required to be Muslims, as they are born into Islam and do not have the freedom to convert.
- The Hindu population faces increased discrimination and intimidation, including the destruction of their temples and places of worship. The government continues to treat pre-independence era Hindu temples differently than mosques from the same era, and gives preference to mosques in the allocation of public funds and lands.
- Hindu activists and leaders have been targeted by government officials and public protest has been put down through the use of draconian internal security laws.
- Several disturbing cases have come to light over Hindus not being allowed to cremate their dead in accordance with Hindu custom, and instead being forced to have an Islamic burial despite family members insisting that the individual was a Hindu.

HAF Recommendations:

- 1) Religious freedom should be allowed and encouraged for ethnic Malays and the minority religious populations in the country.
- 2) The United States, United Nations, the international community, and human rights groups should pressure the Malaysian government to protect Hindu temples from desecration and destruction. Hindu places of worship that existed prior to independence should be designated as temple property and title to the land should be handed to the respective temple trustees/committees as has been done for pre-independence era mosques.
- 3) The Malaysian Government should be urged to not discriminate in the allocation of public funds and land for places of worship between Muslim and minority religious groups.
- 4) Hindu leaders currently detained under draconian laws for leading lawful protests should be immediately released.

- 5) The Malaysian government should respect the wishes of Hindu family members and permit them to carry out final rites for their deceased in accordance with Hindu custom.

ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF PAKISTAN

- In 1947, Hindus were approximately 25% of the population of Pakistan. Now Hindus constitute less than 1.6% of the population.
- Pakistan officially discriminates against non-Muslims through a variety of laws such as blasphemy laws.
- On March 24, 2005, Pakistan restored the discriminatory practice of mandating the inclusion of religious identity of individuals in all new passports.
- Hindus continue to be held disproportionately in conditions tantamount to slavery as bonded laborers despite the practice being officially banned.
- School textbooks continue to promote Islam, hatred of other religions including Hinduism and intolerance toward non-Muslims.
- Recurring reports point to an alarming trend of Hindu girls being kidnapped, raped, held in *madrassas* (Islamic seminaries) and forcibly converted to Islam.
- Hindus continue to be targeted in Balochistan, and more than 5,000 Hindus have been forced to flee.

HAF Recommendations:

- 1) Pakistan should remove all blasphemy laws. Those imprisoned under blasphemy laws should get their day in court within a period of two weeks. Long imprisonments without court appraisal constitute human rights abuse.
- 2) Pakistan should reverse the 2005 decision mandating religious identification in passports.
- 3) Pakistan should set up a Human Rights Commission and a National Minorities Commission to monitor the human rights condition and to enable minorities to enjoy the rights provided to the majority population.
- 4) Pakistan should reform its education system in order to remove inaccuracies about other religions and promote tolerance and pluralism.

- 5) The United States should demand that Pakistan stop aiding all groups who seek to resolve the Kashmir dispute through violent means. Any aid to Pakistan should be contingent on Pakistan's acceptance of a peaceful resolution of the Kashmir dispute.
- 6) The United States should dialogue with Pakistan on the issues of human rights and religious freedom and dispatch a fact-finding committee organized by the United States Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF) to Pakistan.

RUSSIAN FEDERATION

- Russia is a multi-ethnic, multi-religious country.
- The Russian Federation has a weak multiparty political system with a strong presidency, a government headed by a prime minister, and a bicameral legislature.
- The law provides for an independent judiciary. The judiciary, however, did not consistently act as an effective counterweight to other branches of the government.
- The law provides for freedom of speech and of the press; however, government pressure on the media persisted, resulting in numerous infringements of these rights.
- The law provides for freedom of assembly. The International Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON) has been harassed restricting this right.
- The law provides for freedom of association, and the government increasingly harassed several organizations.
- The constitution provides for freedom of religion; however, authorities imposed restrictions on certain groups. Although the constitution provides for the equality of all religions before the law and the separation of church and state, the government did not always respect these provisions in practice.

HAF Recommendations:

- 1) Russia should stand by its constitutional guarantees to ethnic and religious minorities.
- 2) Russian authorities should hold accountable regional administrators who with impunity discriminate against minority institutions and places of worship.

THE KINGDOM OF SAUDI ARABIA

- Saudi Arabia is an absolute monarchy and the *Qu'ran* and *Shari'a* (Islamic law) serve as its constitution. Its law code is founded upon the conservative form of Sunni Islam, known as Wahhabism. This permits judges to use capital or corporal punishment for crimes, including murder, theft, sexual abuse, homosexuality and adultery.
- Non-citizens are required to carry identity cards, which identify cardholders as "Muslim" or "non-Muslim." This is enforced by the *mutawwa'in* or Saudi religious police.
- There is no constitutional protection for the freedom of religion. Citizens are not allowed to choose or change their religion.
- Non-Muslims cannot exhibit any outward religious clothing, text, or symbol, and cannot worship in public. Even private worship is prohibited and punished.
- Intolerance of other religions is embedded in the kingdom's educational institutions.
- Islamic law characterizes Hindus as polytheists. This puts Hindus in the same category as those who practice "black magic" or "sorcery."
- The U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom has branded Saudi Arabia as a "country of particular concern," but U.S. military, oil, and other economic interests in the region has diminished its ability to influence change. Saudi Arabia is the centre of Islamic fundamentalism and it has funded Islamic fundamentalist institutions around the world.

HAF Recommendations:

- 1) The United States government and the world community must continue to pressure Saudi Arabia to change its Islamic nationalist/authoritarian nature. Unless the United States changes its policy towards Saudi Arabia, minorities will continue to face severe and overwhelming discrimination.
- 2) Saudi Arabia must end its support for terrorism and state support for an intolerant, fundamentalist brand of Islam. It must promote basic civil and religious rights for its citizens and guest workers, and reform its education system in order to remove inaccuracies and hate speech directed against other religions. It should promote tolerance and pluralism.

DEMOCRATIC SOCIALIST REPUBLIC OF SRI LANKA

- Sri Lanka is a multi-ethnic, multi-religious nation that has been severely hobbled by ethnic conflict. The violent conflict between the Sinhala-majority Sri Lankan government and the Tamil groups is the result of a combination of religious, ethnic, and linguistic conflict. Tensions between the Sinhalese majority and Tamil separatists in northern Sri Lanka erupted into war in 1983.
- Not all Tamils are Hindus, and the LTTE, the primary Tamil-terrorist outfit, is not a Hindu organization.
- The prolonged conflict is detrimental to all Sri Lankans, especially the large Hindu minority population, which experiences an undue share of violence and displacement.

HAF Recommendations:

- 1) There can be no military solution to ethnic conflicts. Both the LTTE and the Sri Lankan government should pursue a course of peace in order to end the conflict.
- 2) HAF expresses grave concern that the Hindu institutions and Tamil culture in Sri Lanka are severely threatened by the ongoing civil war and encourages all sides in the conflict to protect Hindu institutions from harm.
- 3) The United States, Norway and the United Nations must continue to pressure all parties involved to find an equitable, just and realistic resolution of the crisis.

REPUBLIC OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

- The country is a multi-ethnic, multi-religious island nation with mostly Hindu Indo-Trinidadians and Afro-Trinidadians accounting for most of the population. Roman Catholics and Hindus make up the largest religious groups.
- The racial and religious animosity between Afro-Caribbean and Indo-Caribbeans has been exacerbated over the years. Hindus are now major targets of violence, hate speech and discrimination.
- Indo-Trinidadians have been systematically denied government benefits and employment in government service. The police have too often ignored attacks on Hindu-Trinidadians.

HAF Recommendations:

- 1) The United States should encourage the current Trinidad government to abide by the country's Constitution and guarantee safety and security to Hindus and Indo-Trinidadians.
- 2) The Trinidadian government should practice parity and equality in government response to and support of various ethnic and religious groups, and recognize Hindus and Indians as equal partners in the rule and governance of the nation.
- 3) Trinidad must do more to protect Hindus from violence, hate speech, racial and religious stereotyping. Furthermore the government must safeguard Hindu temples from attacks.
- 4) The Trinidadian government must distance itself from Christian fundamentalists promoting hatred against Hindus and Hinduism, and avoid Christianization of its institutions.

Table of Contents

Introduction.....	2
People’s Republic of Bangladesh.....	5
Introduction.....	5
History	6
Decline of the Hindu Population	8
Status of Human Rights in Bangladesh, 2007	8
Islamist Groups	14
Violations of Constitution and UN Covenants	15
Conclusion and Recommendations	17
Documented Attacks on Hindus in Bangladesh between January 1, 2007 and June 30, 2007	19
Kingdom of Bhutan.....	22
Introduction.....	22
Human Rights Violations against Hindus.....	23
General Human Rights Assessment.....	24
Third Country Resettlement	26
Human Rights Summary – 2007	27
Constitutional Guarantees.....	27
Conclusion and Recommendations	28
Republic of the Fiji Islands.....	30
Introduction.....	31
Status of Human Rights of Hindus in Fiji, 2007.....	33
Violations of Constitution and UN Covenants	33
Conclusion and Recommendations	34
Indian State of Jammu and Kashmir	35
Introduction.....	35
Status of the Human Rights of Hindus in Jammu and Kashmir, 2007	38

Violations of Constitution and UN Covenants	42
Conclusion and Recommendations	43
Malaysia.....	45
Introduction.....	46
Status of Human Rights of Hindus in Malaysia, 2007	46
Violations of Constitution and UN Covenants	50
Conclusion and Recommendations	51
Islamic Republic of Pakistan	52
Introduction.....	53
Hindus in Pakistan	54
Status of Human Rights in Pakistan, 2007	55
Pakistan-Based Terrorist Groups	64
Violations of Constitution and UN Covenants	65
Conclusion and Recommendations	67
Russian Federation	69
Introduction.....	69
Status of Human Rights of Hindus in Russia, 2007	70
Violations of the Constitution and UN Covenants.....	72
Conclusion and Recommendations	74
The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia	75
History	75
Status of Religious Minorities in Saudi Arabia.....	77
Treatment of Hindus	79
Violations of Constitution and UN Covenants	80
Conclusion and Recommendations	80
Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka	83
Introduction.....	84

History	84
Sinhala-Tamil Divide	86
Human Rights Abuses in 2007	89
Violations of Constitution and UN Covenants	91
Conclusion and Recommendations	91
Republic of Trinidad and Tobago.....	93
History	93
Religious Pluralism in Trinidad and Tobago.....	95
Treatment of Hindus in Trinidad and Tobago.....	95
Instances of Discrimination against Hindus of Trinidad and Tobago in 2007.....	100
Violations of Constitution and UN Covenants	103
Conclusion and Recommendations	103
Appendix A International Acts, Conventions, Covenants and Declarations	104
Bangladesh Enemy Property Act/Vested Property Act	104
Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT) Peace Accord of 1997	104
United Nations International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination.....	104
United Nations International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights	105
United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights.....	106
Appendix B.....	107
Attacks on Hindus in Bangladesh from January 1, 2007 to June 30, 2007	107

Table of Figures

Figure 1: Map of People’s Republic of Bangladesh	5
Figure 2: Map of the Kingdom of Bhutan	22
Figure 3: Map of the Republic of the Fiji Islands	30
Figure 4: Map of the Indian State of Jammu and Kashmir	35
Figure 5: Map of Malaysia	45
Figure 6: Map of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan.....	52
Figure 7: Map of the Russian Federation	69
Figure 8: Map of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.....	75
Figure 9: Map of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka	83
Figure 10: Map of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago	93

Introduction

Of the nearly one billion Hindus in the world today, about 20 million live outside of India. While Hindus comprise the majority in India and Nepal, Hindus constitute an important minority in a number of countries around the world. These communities, especially in Pakistan, Bangladesh, and Afghanistan have experienced a tumultuous history, but at various times, their human rights have been violated with impunity by the majority communities. Such human rights violations have persisted for many generations — with or without the connivance of the ruling governments — but have rarely attracted the sustained attention of human rights agencies. It is our intention to subject these human rights violations to regular scrutiny, which the fate of these communities surely deserves. This fourth annual report covers human rights conditions in ten nations and regions across the world during 2007: Bangladesh, Bhutan, Fiji, the Indian state Jammu and Kashmir, Malaysia, Pakistan, Russia, Saudi Arabia, Sri Lanka, and Trinidad and Tobago.

Followers of Hindu traditions constitute the third largest religious group in the world, after Christians (about 2.1 billion) and Muslims (1.4 billion). The majority of Hindus live in the Indian sub-continent and, numbering nearly 827 million people, Hindus constitute 80.5% of the population of India¹. However, the Hindu Diaspora reaches beyond the Indian subcontinent to Europe, Africa, Southeast Asia, the Pacific Islands, and North America where they comprise substantial minorities. In Fiji and some Caribbean nations, Hindus comprise of a significant portion of the population, with representation at the highest levels of government. As a “spiritual community” of related religious and cultural practices (the major religious groups within Hinduism are Vaishnava, Smartha, Shaiva, and Shakta), Hindus do not adhere to a single Scripture, owe allegiance to a single religious institution, follow one religious leader, or adhere to one set of worship, practices and ritual. Hindus regard Buddhists, Jains, and Sikhs as a part of their own wider family though they constitute distinct religious traditions themselves. This report excludes their particular concerns, though the fate of Buddhists in Tibet since 1950 is a matter of tragic contemporary and historical significance that has been the subject of investigation by various international agencies.

While the issue of human rights is of global significance, this report focuses on ongoing human rights violations in the nations/regions listed above. This report does not investigate other human rights violations within India, such as religious conflict, abuse of women or caste discrimination. The Hindu American Foundation believes in the

importance of addressing those problems but they are beyond the scope of this report, which focuses on countries and regions where Hindus are a minority.

In our first report, published in 2005ⁱⁱ, we provided a brief summary of the history of the South Asian region. The departure of the British colonialists in 1947 left India divided into a Muslim majority Pakistan (made up of two regions – West and East Pakistan) and a Hindu majority India. India embraced secularism, proclaiming the State neutral between religions, but allowed minorities to retain their own sectarian practices in areas like personal law. India established the largest and longest sustained democracy in the region. Pakistan labeled itself the Islamic Republic of Pakistan with the adoption of a Constitution based on Islamic jurisprudenceⁱⁱⁱ. It curtailed the political rights of minorities, and Hindus, who constituted approximately 20% of the population in West Pakistan^{iv} and 30% in East Pakistan, were the predominant victims under the Islamic dispensation. Over the sixty years of independence, the Hindu population has dwindled to less than 2% in Pakistan (former West Pakistan), and to about 9% in Bangladesh (former East Pakistan). East Pakistan seceded from West Pakistan with Indian military assistance in 1971 following the genocide committed by the armed forces of Pakistan against its own citizens. The new country was named Bangladesh. In turn, rapid Islamization of the Bangladesh polity over the last decade has led to a substantial rise in attacks against minority groups -- the largest minority constituency being Hindu.

The Indian State of Jammu and Kashmir is the focus of territorial claims by Pakistan, which has encouraged and abetted terrorism^v, successfully expelling the entire Hindu population of several hundred thousand from the Kashmir Valley through a campaign of murder, rape and kidnappings. Pakistani military posturing and an alleged threat of nuclear warfare have diverted attention from the reality of atrocities against Hindus in Kashmir since 1989. Successive Indian governments have paid scant attention to the fate of the Hindu minority of Kashmir because they have concluded that attempting to address their legitimate concerns might constitute an avoidable distraction for the political resolution of the dispute over Kashmir. Too often, the media in India and abroad have taken the cue from this fateful governmental silence over the human rights violations of Kashmiri Hindus by largely ignoring them. World human rights organizations have also been muted in their response to the tragedy that has overtaken Kashmiri Hindus.

HAF's consequent reports reaffirmed the ongoing human rights abuses in the three regions covered in the first report, and also included the status of Hindus in Afghanistan and Fiji.^{vi} This fourth annual report, much larger in scope, will once again demonstrate that Hindu citizens in South Asia and across the Diaspora are targeted victims of

grievous violations of universally recognized human rights. The absence of this issue from the global dialogue on human rights, and the manifest absence of substantive documentation of human rights abuse against Hindus by prominent media sources and non-governmental organizations dedicated to human rights issues continue to prompt our investigations and reports. We provide context to our findings by examining the legal frameworks of individual countries, and the U. N. Human Rights Declaration and various relevant conventions (see Appendix A).

People's Republic of Bangladesh



Figure 1: Map of People's Republic of Bangladesh

© CIA World Factbook

Area: 144,000 sq km

Population: 150,448,339 (July 2007 est.)

Religions: Muslim 88%, Hindu 10%, other 2% (2007)

Ethnic groups: Bengali 98%, other 2% (includes tribal groups, non-Bengali Muslims) (1998)

Languages: Bangla (official, also known as Bengali), English

Location: Southern Asia, bordering the Bay of Bengal, between Burma and India^{vii}

Introduction

Bangladesh, in 2007, was marked by political turmoil and extensive human rights violations. At the end of 2006, a caretaker government was formed amidst fears of election irregularities and violence ahead of the planned general elections. In January, however, the caretaker President declared a State of Emergency and postponed the elections indefinitely, leading to the widespread curtailment of civil liberties and human rights.^{viii} Initially, the Emergency was imposed to deal with large scale violence between rival political parties, but lasted through the end of the year.

Under Emergency Rule, military and police personnel were authorized to arbitrarily arrest and detain citizens, use force to execute orders, and strictly regulate the freedoms of expression and assembly.^{ix} According to Human Rights Watch: “Tens of thousands of people – and perhaps as many as 200,000, according to some reports – have been arrested under the state of emergency without proper judicial oversight.”^x Even student-led political activity on university campuses was restricted under the Emergency. For instance, between May 7 and 9, seven student leaders of the Bangladesh Students League (BSL), the youth wing of the Bangladesh Awami League (BAL) were arrested from their homes for participating in a political rally. Two of the arrested student activists were Hindus: Kripa Binddu Das and Sudas Kumar Das.^{xi}

Severe limitations were also placed on the media, particularly in the publication of criticism of the government. Moreover, human rights organizations and minorities were targeted under the imposed State of Emergency. Several prominent human rights activists were arbitrarily arrested and detained for “anti-state” activities.^{xii} On January 12, two leaders of the Association of Development Agencies, an umbrella group for nongovernmental organizations across the country, were arrested and detained without charge by the notorious Rapid Action Battalion (RAB).^{xiii}

The security forces also indulged in torture and extrajudicial killings. In March, Keshari Ranjan Sarker, a leader of Puja Udjapan Parishad, a Hindu organization, was tortured by security forces in his native village.^{xiv} Furthermore, a well-known tribal leader, and outspoken activist for indigenous rights, Choles Ritchil was tortured to death by Bangladeshi security forces on March 18. Ritchil was initially detained for his opposition to government policies affecting indigenous tribes.^{xv}

History

Bangladesh was created in 1971 from the eastern wing of Pakistan. Its predominantly Bengali population won independence from Pakistan after the India-Pakistan War of 1971. The conflict was preceded by the massacre of an estimated two million East Pakistani citizens, and the ethnic cleansing of 10 million ethnic Bengalis (mainly Hindus), who fled to India. In the summary of his report on the events, dated November 1, 1971, US Senator Edward Kennedy (D - Massachusetts) wrote:

Field reports to the U.S. Government, countless eye-witness journalistic accounts, reports of International agencies such as World Bank and additional information available to the subcommittee document the reign of terror which grips East Bengal (East Pakistan). Hardest hit have been members of the Hindu community who have been robbed of their

lands and shops, systematically slaughtered, and in some places, painted with yellow patches marked 'H'. All of this has been officially sanctioned, ordered and implemented under martial law from Islamabad.^{xvi}

Furthermore, according to then American Consul-General, and senior US diplomat in Dhaka, Archer Blood, the Pakistani military was engaged in the "mass killing of unarmed civilians, the systematic elimination of the intelligentsia, and the annihilation of the Hindu population."^{xvii} Quite remarkably, this genocide has been largely erased from public memory and the perpetrators have escaped unpunished, though identified in an official report. Recently, however, Amnesty International's secretary general Irene Khan has called on Bangladesh to create a "truth commission" to investigate the war crimes committed during the 1971 war.^{xviii}

After independence, Bangladesh initially adopted a constitution with its basic structure ensuring "Nationalism, Secularism, Socialism, and Democracy." In April 23, 1977, however, Bangladesh renounced its commitment to secularism by amending the Constitution to reflect a greater role for Islam in the national body politic. A new clause was appended to the Constitution which affirmed that, "The state shall endeavor to consolidate, preserve and strengthen fraternal relations among Muslim countries based on Islamic solidarity." Furthermore, on June 9, 1988, the Constitution was amended again, making Islam the state religion and prescribing that the principle of absolute trust and faith in Allah would be the basis of all action.^{xix} These actions began a steady and gradual move towards Islamization, resulting in the increased discrimination and persecution of minorities, particularly Hindus.^{xx}

The process of Islamization rapidly expanded in 2001, with the election of the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP), led by Khaleda Zia, and its Islamist allies. Following the elections, the BNP coalition and its supporters unleashed a large-scale campaign of violence targeting the Hindu community that lasted more than 150 days. During that period, there were reportedly more than 10,000 cases of human rights abuses committed against minorities.^{xxi} According to Refugees International, "Scores of Hindu women and girls were raped. In some cases, they were gang raped in front of their male relatives. Hindus were also assaulted on the streets, in their homes, and at their workplaces. Systematic attacks resulted in a mass migration of Hindus to India, and in particular to the bordering state of Tripura. The government did little to prosecute or investigate the violence."^{xxii}

Alongside the increased role of Islam in politics, Bangladesh has also witnessed an explosion of *madrasas* (Islamic seminaries), teaching the same fundamentalist version of Islam that inspired the Taliban. The massive proliferation of *madrasas*, estimated at 64,000, is seen as an intentional effort to change “Bangladesh’s culture of religious tolerance.”^{xxiii} Moreover, activity by Muslim militants and radical organizations has significantly increased in recent years. For instance, since 1999, bombings have left over 181 people dead, and more than 1,700 injured.^{xxiv}

Decline of the Hindu Population

At the time of Partition in 1947, the Hindu population, in what is now Bangladesh, was approximately 31%.^{xxv} By 1961, Hindus comprised 19% of the population, and by 1974, the Hindu community had further declined to 14%. According to Saleem Samad, a journalist and human rights observer, in 1991, the Hindu population in Bangladesh should have been 32.5 million, considering normal rates of growth.^{xxvi} The actual population, however, was only 12.5 million. By this calculation, the number of Hindus missing from Bangladesh over two decades, ending in 1991, is 20 million. This figure includes both those persons killed or forced to flee the country. The number of Hindus that fled Bangladesh between 1964 and 1991 was estimated at “5.3 million people or 535 people per day.”^{xxvii}

Bangladesh now has a total population of approximately 150 million people, only 10% of whom are Hindus (some estimates place the figure at 9%).^{xxviii} Consequently, the Hindu community in Bangladesh has dropped from 31% to 10% in a span of 60 years.

Status of Human Rights in Bangladesh, 2007

In 2007, the human rights situation in Bangladesh continued to deteriorate, as religious minorities were subjected to widespread violence and human rights abuses, often with the direct support of government forces and Islamist parties. The gang rape of women and girls, murder, beatings, harassment, kidnappings, attacks on temples, looting of gold and jewelry, and illegal occupation of land constitute the daily litany of human rights abuses suffered by Hindus, tribal people, and to a lesser extent Christians and Buddhists. The sheer number of attacks indicates that violence has been systematically used to intimidate Hindus and force them to leave Bangladesh.^{xxix} Hindus also face significant economic and social disadvantages, with severe under-representation in government and military jobs.^{xxx}

A comprehensive list documenting the atrocities committed against Hindus in 2007 is included in Appendix B. Consequently, the remainder of this section gives

only an overview of the nature and extent of abuse faced by the Hindu community in Bangladesh.

As in the past we have relied on Bangladesh-based human rights organizations for data on human rights abuses. The chief provider of information was the Bangladesh Hindu Bouddha Christian Oikiya Parishad - Bangladesh Hindu, Buddhist and Christian Unity Council (BHBCOP).^{xxxix}

General Violence

The Hindu community in Bangladesh endured repeated acts of violence and persecution in 2007, leading to an environment of fear and insecurity. The types of attacks included murder, theft, kidnapping, extortion and harassment. For instance, on the night of January 9, a gang of approximately 100 armed Muslims attacked the predominantly Hindu village of Amuyir, Upazilla-Sadar, in Dinajpur district. The intruders set 50 houses on fire, while their residents were still sleeping. The event rendered many of the Hindu villagers homeless, and resulted in the serious injury of about 22 people. Moreover, the police and local authorities failed to take appropriate action against the perpetrators.^{xxxix}

In another event in January, members of the Hindu business community in Shreang Bazar, Comilla district were targeted, as three people were viciously killed by their attackers. The youngest of the victims was the 12-year old brother of businessman Uttam Kumer Debnath. Incidents such as these are frequent occurrences within the Hindu business community in Bangladesh.^{xxxix}

The abduction of Hindus is also a common practice, and is often accompanied by ransom demands. Many times, however, the kidnapped person turns up dead. For example, in March, Milan Mondal, the son of Ananda Mondal was kidnapped from his village of Laxmipur in Faridpur district. After he was brutally murdered by his abductors, Milan's dead body was recovered by the police.^{xxxix} Furthermore, on May 5, members of an extremist Muslim student organization, Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD), were involved in the attempted kidnapping of a teenage Hindu girl, Namita Bavallav, from her home in Askor-Dusmi village, Agoiljhara Upazila. Although the abduction was unsuccessful, the attack resulted in the injury of several Hindus in the village, including the girl's father and uncles. Instead of registering a case against the Muslim attackers, the police arrested one of the girl's uncles. Subsequently, the same gang of JCD members returned and attacked the village a second time on May 19. The police once again

refused to lodge a complaint against the assailants, and mistreated the Hindu complainants.^{xxxv}

Violence against Women

Violence against women is a common weapon used to intimidate and harass minority communities across the world. It has similarly been used in Bangladesh as a means to attack Hindus. For instance, in the period immediately following the 2001 elections, approximately 1,000 Hindu women and girls were raped.^{xxxvi}

According to a recent report from Global Human Rights Defence: “In Bangladesh, gang rape has become a major tool of political terror, forcing minorities to flee and has proven more effective than murder. The victims have all been women belonging to either of the ethnic/religious minorities. Neither little girls nor pregnant women and the elderly are spared. The perpetrators are men belonging to various branches of Muslim extremist political parties, including direct branches to the ruling party BNP (e.g. various student wing’s of BNP like JCD [Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal], Jubo Dal).”^{xxxvii} The report goes on to state that rape has been used to shame Hindu society, and as a genocidal device to drive Hindus out of Bangladesh. In addition, government officials have failed to take adequate measures to prevent and prosecute such crimes.^{xxxviii}

Violent attacks on Hindu women continued unabated in 2007. While there were several reported incidents, only a few have been included to illustrate the nature and brutality of the attacks. In April, there were two particularly disturbing incidents involving the rape of young Hindu girls. A 10-year old Hindu girl from the village of Shibnagar was raped by a Muslim man named Taher Miah. Miah was later arrested following a complaint lodged by the victim’s family. The second incident was the gang rape of a Hindu girl by four Muslim men in Toktabonia, Amtali district. One of the perpetrators lured the girl out of the village with a promise of employment, after which she was gang-raped. Only one of the attackers, Abdul Malek, has been arrested, while three other suspects remain at large.^{xxxix}

Besides rape, the kidnapping of young Hindu girls is also a common practice in Bangladesh. In January, a 13-year old Hindu girl was kidnapped from her village in Lalmanirhat district by a number of armed Muslim men. The young girl’s father was seriously injured in the attack and threatened by the men. The police failed to arrest and prosecute the attackers. In another incident in March, a teenage girl from Babulia Upazilla-Sadar in Satkhira district was kidnapped by four Muslim men and gang-raped.^{xl}

Attacks on Temples/Religious Sites

Attacks on Hindu temples, festivals, and religious sites have become increasingly frequent in recent years. This alarming trend continued in 2007, with a number of reported incidents. The following are some examples to demonstrate the extent of attacks on Hindu religious sites and symbols.

On February 13, the Sree Sree Bhabani Hindu Temple at Bhabhanipur in Sherpur-Bogra district was demolished by government forces, despite a court order issued to protect the property and temple. The local military forces illegally destroyed the temple structure, and mistreated devotees and the temple administrator. Following the incident, local human rights activist and president of the Human Rights Congress for Bangladesh Minorities (HRCBM) Rabindra Ghosh, intervened to have the land restored to temple authorities, and attempted to register a case with the local police. Instead of registering the case, however, the police issued a warrant for Mr. Ghosh's arrest, claiming that he was interfering and engaging in "anti-state" activities.^{xli}

Temples and religious sites are especially vulnerable during Hindu religious festivals. In September, a temple was attacked in Bera Pora in Santhia upazila, during the Hindu festival of Janmashtami, which celebrates the birth of Lord Krishna. Those involved in the incident were local leaders and activists of Jamaat-e-Islami, a radical Islamist political party. In describing the attack, Pradip Kumar De, President of Siddheshwari Puja Mandir Committee, stated that, "Armed with sticks and sharp weapons, they stormed the Mandir and threatened us to stop the three-day program. They knocked down the shed built for the guests, cut down trees and damaged the rath (chariot)."^{xlii}

The widely celebrated Durga Puja festival, dedicated to the Goddess Durga, came under attack in October. Prior to the start of the festival, a number of *murtis* of the Goddess Durga were desecrated in separate locations, including Faridpur, Khulna and Satkhira. The attacks were condemned by various political and social organizations, such as the Awami League, the BNP, Bangladesh Minority Lawyers Association, and the Bangladesh Hindu Parishad.^{xliii}

Land Encroachment/Evictions

Land encroachment is one of the major issues faced by the Hindu minority in Bangladesh, and includes the illegal occupation of land, homes, businesses, and temples. The problem began when the former Pakistani government implemented the Enemy Property Act following the 1965 Indo-Pakistan war. The Act officially designated Hindus as "enemies" and was used to confiscate land and property belonging to Hindus.

Subsequently, after the independence of Bangladesh in 1971, the Act remained in effect and was simply renamed in 1974 as the Vested Property Act. As a result, nearly 1.2 million Hindu families, or 44% of all Hindu households in Bangladesh, were affected by the Enemy Property Act and its post-independence version, the Vested Property Act.^{xliv}

In an effort to return the “vested” properties to their original Hindu owners, the Vested Property Return Bill was passed in 2001, and the Vested Property Act was abolished. The Bill, however, brought little relief to Hindus, who continued to be deprived of their property in large numbers. According to a study by Abul Barkat of Dhaka University, nearly 200,000 Hindu families have lost or been robbed of 122,000 bighas of land (a bigha equals 1333.33 sq.meters/1594.65 sq. yards/0.33 acres), including their houses, in the six years since the Vested Property Act was annulled. Overall, Hindus have been robbed of a combined 2.2 million acres of land. At the current market price, the value of those 2.2 million acres is Tk 2.52 billion (\$1 = 70 Tk), which is more than half of the country’s gross domestic product.^{xlv}

Land-grabbing in Bangladesh operates through a system of force and deception, supported and patronized by influential politicians and political organizations. Between 2001 and 2006, “[f]orty-five percent of the land grabbers were affiliated with the BNP, 31 percent were Awami League members, 8 percent were affiliated with the Jamaat-e-Islami and 6 percent were with the Jatiya Party and other political organizations.”^{xlvi}

In the first six months of 2007 alone, there were at least 72 reported incidents involving the illegal occupation, or attempted occupation of Hindu owned properties. These incidents were invariably accompanied by violence, often resulting in serious injuries to the Hindu owners and their families.^{xlvii} One example that demonstrates the nature of the attacks was an event that occurred on January 12 in Padmagram village, Barguna district. In that particular case, a group of Muslims led by Abdul Hakim tried to occupy the land of Narayan Chandra Shil. Consequently, the home was attacked, looted and set on fire. The attackers also intentionally destroyed a miniature temple and images of several Hindu Deities.^{xlviii}

In another disturbing incident on January 17, in Bagerhat district, a Hindu widow, Madhabi Rani’s home was attacked in an attempt to evict her and occupy her land. The attackers were led by a powerful local Muslim named Muhuri Nazrul Islam Dakuya, who threatened to kill Madhabi Rani and her family if they didn’t leave.^{xlix}

In June, more than 10,000 Hindus faced eviction from their land in Chakuli, Mirpur, outside of Dhaka. Although the Hindu community owns the land, and is protected by a High Court injunction, the army cantonment board has been actively trying to evict the Hindu residents and illegally occupy their land. Cantonment Board officials reached the area on June 6 to demolish the village homes and temple situated on the property, but had to postpone the operation due to rain. The large number of Hindus residing in this enclave remains in imminent danger of being evicted at any time.ⁱ

Chittagong Hills Tract

The Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT) located in south-east Bangladesh is home to 13 separate indigenous tribes collectively known as the Jumma. The tribes belong to different religions, including Hinduism, Buddhism and Christianity. Although the region is replete with natural resources, it is economically underdeveloped and poorer than other parts of the country. Beginning in 1971, after Bangladesh's independence, there was an increase in tension between the tribal population of CHT and the central government, resulting in armed conflict. Consequently, the government moved large numbers of armed forces into the region and supported a policy of settling Bengali Muslims from other parts of the country into CHT. Between 1964 and 1991, approximately 400,000 Bengali Muslims were resettled into the CHT by government officials.ⁱⁱ

In addition, Islamic groups have intensified and expanded their activities in CHT, leading to increased Islamization, and resentment from the indigenous tribes. These radical groups have also incited the Bengali Muslim settlers to attack the Jumma people.ⁱⁱⁱ

All of these factors have contributed to massive human rights violations in CHT, including encroachment of indigenous lands, forced migrations, violence, destruction of religious sites, and the detention and torture of tribal activists. More than 65,000 tribal people have fled for India, and far greater numbers have become internally displaced within Bangladesh.ⁱⁱⁱⁱ

Human rights abuses in CHT continued unrestrained in 2007, as there were several reported incidents targeting the Jumma tribes. In August, the military took steps to resettle 800 Bengali Muslim families, and evict indigenous tribal people from Sadhana Tila, an area encompassing 300 acres of land. The area also houses a Buddhist temple, which has been desecrated by some of the Bengali settlers. In September, the illegal settlers destroyed homes belonging to the tribals, and threatened Buddhist

monks to leave the temple.^{liv} The resettlement of Bengali Muslims and eviction of Jummas is occurring with the active assistance of the security forces.

Many indigenous activists have also been arrested and detained under the Emergency rule implemented in January. Human rights groups assert that some of the detained persons have also been tortured and harassed while in police custody. On March 3, Suresh Mohan Chakma was arrested from his home by military personnel without a warrant, and subjected to torture. He died a few days later after he was released, as a result of the torture. Similarly, in August, Rasel Chakma was arrested and died while in the custody of security forces.^{lv}

The conflict between the tribes of the CHT and the central government remains unresolved, as the Jumma people continue to suffer at the hands of government forces and the Bengali Muslim settlers.

Islamist Groups

There are a number of Islamic extremist groups and political parties operating in Bangladesh. The following list is a few of the major organizations.^{lvi}

Group Name	Description
Jamaat-e-Islami (Jel)	Islamist political party that was part of the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) coalition that came to power in the 2001 election, and was involved in violent attacks on Hindu supporters of the opposition Awami party. Its ultimate goal is to create an Islamic state in Bangladesh.
Islami Chhatra Shibir (ICS)	Youth wing associated with Jel, and has contact with Muslim youth extremist groups around the world. ICS has been involved in political and religious violence, and has been implicated in a number of bomb blasts throughout Bangladesh. Islami also controls a number of <i>madrasas</i> across the

	country.
Islami Oikyo Jote (IOJ)	Small Islamist party, and was also part of the BNP coalition government. Has supported violence against Hindus.
Jama'atul Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB)	JMB has been implicated in a number of suicide bomb blasts across Bangladesh. Several of its leaders were previously affiliated with JeI and ICS.
Hakat-ul-Jihad-al-Islami (HuJI)	Largest militant Muslim organization operating in Bangladesh, and has an estimated 15,000 members, recruited primarily from <i>madrasas</i> . Involved in a number of attacks.

Violations of Constitution and UN Covenants

Constitution of Bangladesh

The Constitution of Bangladesh is designed to protect the human rights of all persons living in the country, regardless of race, religion, or sex. Article 11 of the Constitution explicitly states: "The Republic shall be a democracy in which fundamental human rights and freedoms and respect for the dignity and worth of the human person shall be guaranteed."^{lvi} Article 28 further provides that: "The State shall not discriminate against any citizen on grounds only of religion, race caste, sex or place of birth," while Article 31 declares that the protection of the law is "... the inalienable right of every citizen, wherever he may be."^{lviii}

Despite constitutional assurances of equal protection, however, minorities, human rights activists, and journalists face unrestrained violence and persecution. Moreover, rape is used as a weapon to subjugate and terrorize Hindu and tribal women. The Constitution also provides freedom of religion to all of its citizens under Article 41, which states: "Every citizen has the right to profess, practice or propagate any religion [and] every religious community or denomination has the right to establish, maintain and manage its religious institutions."^{lix} The attacks on Hindu temples, the destruction of Hindu deities, and the disruption of Hindu festivals, are in direct violation of this basic constitutional guarantee of religious freedom.

International Law

In addition to Bangladesh's constitutional human right guarantees, its accession to the United Nation's International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (CCPR) took place on September 6, 2000.^{lx} According to Article 2 of the CCPR: "Each State Party to the present Covenant undertakes to respect and to ensure to all individuals within its territory and subject to its jurisdiction the rights recognized in the present Covenant, without distinction of any kind, such as race, color, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status."^{lxi} Similar to Article 41 of Bangladesh's Constitution, CCPR Article 18 states, "Everyone shall have the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion. This right shall include freedom to have or to adopt a religion or belief of his choice, and freedom, either individually or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief in worship, observance, practice and teaching."^{lxii} And most importantly, Article 27 maintains, "In those States in which ethnic, religious or linguistic minorities exist, persons belonging to such minorities shall not be denied the right, in community with the other members of their group, to enjoy their own culture, to profess and practice their own religion, or to use their own language."^{lxiii} As demonstrated throughout this report, far from being protected, the ethnic and religious minorities within Bangladesh are being harassed, pillaged, raped, and driven from their homes with no corrective action by the government. Although Bangladesh agreed to this international covenant over seven years ago, its government has yet to enforce the rights protected under the CCPR.

Bangladesh has also agreed to the United Nation's International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms for Racial Discrimination, which defines "racial discrimination" as "any distinction, exclusion, restriction or preference based on race, color, descent, or national or ethnic origin which has the purpose or effect of nullifying or impairing the recognition, enjoyment or exercise, on an equal footing, of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural or any other field of public life."^{lxiv} Article 2 of the Convention states in part: "Each State Party undertakes to engage in no act or practice of racial discrimination against persons, groups of persons or institutions and to ensure that all public authorities and public institutions, national and local, shall act in conformity with this obligation."^{lxv} The VPRB/2001 is in clear violation of Article 2 of the Convention as it is a form of racial discrimination, which directly targets minority groups within Bangladesh, particularly Hindus. Again, no attempts have been made by the Bangladesh government to rectify this discrimination.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Bangladesh was created after the India-Pakistan War of 1971 that was preceded by the massacre of an estimated two million East Pakistani citizens and the ethnic cleansing of nearly 10 million Bengalis (mostly Hindus) who fled to India. The Hindu population in Bangladesh has steadily declined over the years, from 31% in 1947 to only 10% today. Recently, Hindus have become increasingly vulnerable with the ascendancy of Islamist parties and radical Muslim organizations.

The condition of Hindus and other minorities continued to worsen in 2007, as they were subjected to rampant violence and oppression. In addition, during 2007, a State of Emergency was imposed, leading to the widespread violation of human rights. Under Emergency Rule, government forces acted with impunity, resulting in thousands of arbitrary arrests, torture, extrajudicial killings, and suppression of the media and political activity. The Emergency remained in effect through the end of year.

We repeat, as we did in the 2006 report, that the Bangladesh Government must implement the following recommendations regarding the Vested Property Act (VPA) in order to significantly improve the human rights situation in the country:

- Immediately lift the State of Emergency, and hold fair and free elections
- The Vested Property Act (VPA), as an encroachment on the law of inheritance, must be explicitly abolished;
- A list containing details (name, address, amount of land and other assets dispossessed by type and year of dispossession, and current status) of those affected by Enemy Property Act (EPA/VPA) must be published by the Government;
- All activities related to the identification and enlistment of any property as vested must be banned;
- All vested property under government custody must be returned to the original owners or their legal heirs who are permanent residents of Bangladesh;
- Property must not be seized from any non-Muslim in Bangladesh under the vested property administration if the owners of the property, or their legal inheritors, are in possession of that property;

- All 99-year leases of vested properties must be declared null and void, and the ownership rights of the original owners or their inheritors restored;
- All vested temple property and places of cremation must be un-vested and brought under public trust;
- The law of inheritance must be enforced with adequate provision for inheritance by female heirs.

Rabindra Ghose, a Bangladesh human rights activist, has discussed the imperatives above. HAF also supports the call by The International Bangladesh Foundation, a British group led by Lord Dholakia and Lord Avebury. The Foundation has urged the following steps:^{lxvi}

- That the Government of Bangladesh should establish an Inspectorate of Madrasas, and close down those which are being used to incite the commission of criminal offences and communal hatred;
- That preparations be made, and appropriate reforms instituted, to ensure a free and fair election under a neutral administration, conducted by an independent election commission along with the interim government, to be chosen in consultation with the Opposition;
- That the Government of Bangladesh ensures the independence of the Judiciary, and prevents and reverses party politicization of the police, administration, the judiciary and other important institutions;
- That the Government of Bangladesh repeals the 5th and 8th amendment of the Constitution and the anti-minority and racist laws such as the vested property legislation;
- That the Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT) Peace Accord of 1997 be implemented and the demographic transformation of the CHT under military occupation be ended;
- That the Government of Bangladesh in accordance with the constitutional rights of the people, provides equal rights to all minorities;
- That the Government of Bangladesh establishes a permanent and independent commission for the promotion of ethnic, gender and religious equality;
- That donors, including the World Bank, USAID, the European Union and others, ask the Bangladesh government to concentrate on good governance, and in particular, on the maintenance of stable democracy in Bangladesh, based on

respect for human rights, the rule of law and the independence of the judiciary;
and

- That an international civil society network be established to monitor the progress of Bangladesh towards compliance with international human rights standards, to make representations to governments and to the UN Human Rights Commission and to hold further meetings.

As noted in HAF's prior annual human rights reports,^{lxvii} attacks against Hindus in Bangladesh constitute the most serious threat to the Hindu community anywhere in the world.

Documented Attacks on Hindus in Bangladesh between January 1, 2007 and June 30, 2007^{lxviii} (See Appendix B for complete details)

January 2007

There were 50 documented incidents of human rights abuse against Hindus during January 2007:

Rape	2
Land confiscation/Forcible eviction	7
Attacks on Hindu temples	6
Kidnap	3
Murder	11
Attack/theft/looting/intimidation	19
Other	2
TOTAL	50

February 2007

There were 36 documented incidents of human rights abuse against Hindus during February 2007:

Rape	3
Land confiscation/Forcible eviction	14
Attacks on Hindu temples	1
Kidnap	2
Murder	6
Attack/theft/looting/intimidation	19
Other	1
TOTAL	36

March 2007

There were 50 documented incidents of human rights abuse against Hindus during March 2007:

Rape	2
Land confiscation/Forcible eviction	14
Attacks on Hindu temples	2
Kidnap	2
Murder	8
Attack/theft/looting/intimidation	19
Other	3
TOTAL	50

April 2007

There were 40 documented incidents of human rights abuse against Hindus during April 2007:

Rape	5
Land confiscation/Forcible eviction	13
Attacks on Hindu temples	3
Kidnap	4
Murder	4
Attack/theft/looting/intimidation	10
Other	1
TOTAL	40

May 2007

There were 42 documented incidents of human rights abuse against Hindus during May 2007:

Rape	0
Land confiscation/Forcible eviction	13
Attacks on Hindu temples	4
Kidnap	6
Murder	3
Attack/theft/looting/intimidation	14
Other	2
TOTAL	42

June 2007

There were 52 documented incidents of human rights abuse against Hindus during June 2007:

Rape	4
Land confiscation/Forcible eviction	11
Attacks on Hindu temples	2
Kidnap	7
Murder	10
Attack/theft/looting/intimidation	18
Other	0
TOTAL	52

According to data provided by local human rights groups, the total number of attacks on Hindus between January 1, 2007 and June 30, 2007, was 270. At this point, only the first six months of data for 2007 are available. Unfortunately, many incidents of human rights abuse against minorities are either unreported or not comprehensively and effectively documented by the media and human rights observers. The work of human rights groups is severely limited due to the strain and pressure they face from vigilante groups and police authorities. Thus, the exact number of violations is difficult to obtain.

Kingdom of Bhutan



Figure 2: Map of the Kingdom of Bhutan

© CIA World Factbook

Area: 47,000 sq km

Population: 2,327,849. Note: other estimates range as low as 810,000 (July 2007 est.)

Religion: Lamaistic Buddhist 75%, Indian- and Nepalese-influenced Hinduism 25%^{lxix}
Buddhism is the state religion; Hinduism is officially recognized but discouraged;
Christianity is not recognized

Ethnicity: Sarchokpas (40% and are Buddhist), Lhotshampas (35% -- Hindus who speak Nepali and Hindi), Ngalungs/Ngalongpa (20%), Brokpas, Doyas, Bumthangpas, Khengpa and Adivashis^{lxx}

National Language: Dzongkha (official), Bhotes speak various Tibetan dialects, Nepalese speak various Nepalese dialects^{lxxi}

Location: Southern Asia, between China and India

Introduction

Bhutan has been ruled by an absolute monarchy since 1907. Power was shifted by the fourth hereditary King Jigme Singye Wangchuck to his heir Crown Prince Jigme Khesar

Namgyel Wangchuck on December 9, 2006. Prior to the Wangchuck dynasty coming to power, the country was under the administrative control of the Buddhist theocratic leader Zhabdrung Ngawang Namgyel. Bhutan lacks a constitution, though the government unveiled a draft constitution in 2005, which was written by handpicked loyalists of the monarchy. According to the draft Constitution, Bhutan will be a “Democratic Constitutional Monarchy,” meaning that power will remain with the King, and therefore will not be a true democracy.

Mock elections were held on April 21, 2007 in all 47 constituencies and at 869 polling stations as a run up to the scheduled elections in March 2008.^{lxxii} Election observers from the U.N. and India were present at the mock elections.

Bhutan will hold its first general election March 24, 2008 for the National Assembly.^{lxxiii} Two parties – the Druk Phuensum Tshogpa (DPT) and the People's Democratic Party (PDP) – registered to contest the elections. The DPT seems to have won the elections disproportionately raising concerns as to the viability of an effective opposition. The third political party, the Bhutan National Party (BNP), had its registration papers rejected.

Human Rights Violations against Hindus

In the early 1990s, Bhutan evicted over 100,000 Hindus and Nyingmapa Buddhist followers, primarily from the southern and eastern parts of the country. Hindus of Southern Bhutan are officially called the Lhotshampas, who speak Hindi and Nepali, while the Nyingmapa followers of eastern Bhutan are called Sharchokpas, and speak Tshangla-lo.

More than 100,000 Bhutanese citizens, nearly one sixth of the kingdom's total population of approximately 700,000 have been forced to leave or forcibly evicted from the country by the regime. As of December 2006, approximately 106,000 Bhutanese refugees are living in seven refugee camps in eastern Nepal managed by the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR). Moreover, an additional 15,000 to 20,000 undocumented refugees are scattered outside the camps in Nepal, and in the Indian states of West Bengal, Assam, Arunachal Pradesh and Sikkim without any assistance or legal status.^{lxxiv}

Bhutan is a multi-religious, multi-cultural and multi-lingual society. However, for the royal kingdom, “Pluralism was only practical for a larger country where a diversity of customs, traditions and culture enriches that nation. A small country like Bhutan cannot afford the luxury of such diversity which may impede the growth of social harmony and unity among its people.” This was the “ethnic cohesion” mantra that was delivered by the king in 1990 during the initial stages of Bhutan's crisis.^{lxxv}

In the name of national integration, the government implemented various racist and discriminatory policies such as the “One Nation, One People” policy aimed at forced homogenization of a multi-ethnic society. This policy was designed to annihilate the culture, religion and language of Lhotshampas, Sharchokpas and other minority ethnic, religious and linguistic groups. Under this policy, all other ethnic and minority groups are required to disregard their distinct social and cultural identities, and conform to the socio-religious framework created by the politically and economically dominant Drukpa Kargyudpa, to which the royal family belongs.

To the State, “Bhutanese national identity” means creating national integration through the forced assimilation of cultures, and suppression of ethnic and religious diversity. This dangerous ideology has already led to the expulsion and deprivation of rights of the Hindu Lhotshampas and other dissidents, through intimidation and the use of force.

In addition, the State has used Buddhism as a political tool, and in a manner that suits the interests of the ruling elite. Consequently, over the years the Bhutanese polity has become increasingly communalized. Moreover, politics is practiced along ethnic lines and has been monopolized by members of one ethnic group, the Drukpa Kargyudpa.

Being aware of the global thrust to support democratic movements and its import to Bhutan, the government crafted a strategy to prevent the demand for democratic reforms. “Depopulation” became part of state policy and state strategy.

Given the current situation, the repatriation of refugees is difficult if not impossible without effecting a change in existing laws. These laws declare a citizen anti-national if one is found to be in contact with any dissident. The laws also have been used to declare several thousand refugees as voluntarily émigrés who are not allowed to return to the country. Several thousand citizens have been intimidated to flee and asked to fill out voluntary migration forms under duress.

Today, the demands for establishment of human rights, end of racism and discrimination, creation of participatory and political institutions, establishment of a secular political and social order, the rule of law, balanced economic growth, and repatriation of Bhutanese refugees are all necessary for resolving the current political crisis. The reduction of humanitarian assistance by the UNHCR and the discontinuation of bilateral negotiations between the governments of Bhutan and Nepal have also created frustration among the residents in the refugee camps.

General Human Rights Assessment

According to the Centre for Protection of Minorities and Against Racism and Discrimination in Bhutan (CEMARD-Bhutan), the “human rights situation in Bhutan began to deteriorate from the early 1990s,” and that the genesis of the present political crisis in Bhutan is the result of “fundamental weaknesses arising from the socio-political

institutions and feudal attitudes.” CEMARD claims that these institutions and attitudes have worked towards creating a national identity based on the narrow Drukpa Kargyudpa tradition of Mahayana Buddhism, and the imposition of a Drukpa Kargyudpa culture and values on a multi-cultural and multi-ethnic society.^{lxxvi}

On January 6, 1989, the king issued a royal decree called “*Driglam Namzha*” as part of the promotion of a distinct national identity and the “One Nation, One People” theme in the Sixth Five-Year Plan (1986-1991). The edict of King Jigme Singye Wangchuck states that “any person not following this directive will be answerable to the concerned Dzongdas (Chief District Officers) who have been vested with full authority to implement this policy.” The policy deals with matters such as how to eat, how to sit, how to speak, how to dress and how to bow down before authorities in true, medieval, feudal style. The dress code which came into enforcement from May 1, 1989, strictly banned both men and women of wearing any dresses other than the type worn by the royal elites, *Gho* for men and *Kira* for women (robe like dresses).^{lxxvii}

The “One Nation, One People” policy of the government stresses the need for a distinct “national identity.” It does not envision forging this identity to encompass the diversity of the nation’s cultures. The policy imposes the Drukpa Kargyudpa traditions and customs on the multi-ethnic and multi-cultural society. Under the Driglam Namzha policy, the teaching of the Nepali language, spoken by the Hindu Lhotshampas, was removed from the school curriculum, and Dzongkha language developed in the 1980s, made compulsory. Failure in the Dzongkha language examination results in the denial of promotion to the next grade level in schools and even entry into Civil Service. Naturalization of citizens is based on whether the individual can speak and write Dzongkha.

According to CEMARD, “The feudalistic attitude of the royal regime has imposed and prescribed strict adherence to the set of Buddhist dogmas and beliefs among the Bhutanese population. Driglam Namzha designed within the traditional attire of Drukpa Kargyudpa tradition directly attacks the custom and values of non-Drukpa Kargyudpa followers. The theocratic ideology of clerics profoundly influences the administration and poses a challenge to the creation of a modern secular nation-state. The regime’s bogey of preserving traditions and culture through the newly drafted constitutional provisions seems to be a shield for protecting feudal and despotic rule.”

The imprisonment of Khenpo Thinley Oezer, a prominent Nyingmapa Buddhist scholar, who was released after eight years in prison on October 22, 2005 on the condition that he will not move out of the country at least for one year is an example of the attack on human rights by the Bhutanese regime.

Bhutan has been an U.N. member since 1971. It is also a member of the South Asian Association of Regional Cooperation (SAARC). The Bhutanese government has so far signed and ratified six international human rights covenants, treaties and conventions

but not implemented any one of them satisfactorily. There is no monitoring done by the UN agencies either. India, Bangladesh and Thailand have embassies in Thimphu. The United Nations Development Program has an office there as well. Bhutan has diplomatic relations with India, Nepal, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Pakistan, Maldives, Japan, Singapore, Kuwait and most of the European countries including The Netherlands, Denmark, Sweden and Switzerland. Bhutan does not maintain formal diplomatic relations with the United States, although informal contact is maintained between the Bhutanese and U.S. Embassy in New Delhi, India.^{lxxviii}

Bhutan has so far signed the following international instruments:

- Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (1979)
- Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989)
- Geneva Convention for the Amelioration of the Condition of the Wounded and Sick in Armed Forces in the Field (1949)
- Geneva Convention for the Amelioration of the Condition of Wounded, sick and Shipwrecked Members of Armed Forces at Sea (1949)
- Geneva Convention relative to the Treatment of Prisoners of War (1949)
- Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civil Persons in Time of War (1949)

The living conditions in the refugee camps in Nepal have been deteriorating, particularly after the UNHCR started decreasing the supply of relief items and phasing out a number of its humanitarian programs, which it had agreed to provide when the UNHCR signed the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the government of Nepal in 1991.

By 1994, when the first census was conducted by the UNHCR and the Government of Nepal, there were almost 85,000 refugees registered with the UNHCR in the districts of Jhapa and Morang in Eastern Nepal, whereas nearly 10,000 were reportedly scattered in Nepal and India without refugee status. As of December 2006, the refugee population has increased, and is estimated at 106,000 refugees living in seven refugee camps in eastern Nepal. The Nepalese Government and the UNHCR have jointly started profiling on November 15, 2006. They have completed surveys of three camps (Beldangi- I, II and III). Observers believe that the motive behind the current profiling is to identify refugees who could be later selected for resettlement in the United States and other countries in the West.

Third Country Resettlement

According to the Asian Centre for Human Rights (ACHR), there are “approximately [108,000] Bhutanese refugees registered by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees in seven camps in eastern Nepal”.^{lxxix} The Core Working Group, consisting of

Australia, Canada, Denmark, the Netherlands, New Zealand and Norway, has been considering resettlement of these refugees in third countries.

The U.S. has announced that it would resettle approximately 60,000 refugees, and Canada 5,000 refugees. The U.S. has further indicated that it is committed to resettle all refugees who are interested in resettlement, even if that number exceeds 60,000, ACHR reported.

Norway, Denmark, Switzerland, New Zealand, Austria and Canada have also shown willingness to accept the Bhutanese refugees. Offers of third-country resettlement from the international community have created serious division and debate within the refugee communities. This initiative has not been accepted and appreciated by the majority of the refugees who have been hoping to return to Bhutan.^{lxxx}

Human Rights Summary – 2007

The human rights situation in Bhutan continued to remain deplorable even after 17 years of exile for 100,000 plus Bhutanese citizens. The primarily Hindu refugees are sheltered within UN sponsored makeshift camps in eastern Nepal, waiting to be safely repatriated to their homeland with dignity. Bhutan is becoming aggressive in its policy, terming the refugees as “ready-made terrorists,” while the host country Nepal — affected by severe political instability — has not been able to address the considerable needs of the refugees.

There was no progress in 2007 towards finding an amicable solution to the refugee problem. The World Food Program (WFP), the CARITAS-Nepal, the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) and AMDA-Nepal are the principal program-implementing partners but have now started showing fatigue.

Constitutional Guarantees

According to Article 3 of the Bhutanese Constitution, “Buddhism is the spiritual heritage of Bhutan, which promotes the principles and values of peace, non-violence, compassion and tolerance,” and that the King is the protector of all religions in Bhutan. By officially recognizing Buddhism in the Constitution, Hinduism and other religions are relegated to an inferior status, and subject to discriminatory policies.

Article 7 guarantees all Bhutanese “the right to life, liberty and security of person,” and “the right to freedom of speech, opinion and expression”. Moreover, Article 7, section 4, guarantees Bhutanese citizens “the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion,” and assures that “no person shall be compelled to belong to another faith by means of coercion or inducement”. Despite the assurances contained in Article 7, religious intolerance has forced nearly 100,000 Hindu Lhotshampas out of Bhutan.

Section 15 of the Constitution guarantees every citizen equality before the law without discrimination based on “race, sex, language, religion, politics or other status”.^{lxxxix} The government’s support for the “One Nation, One People” policy, however, systematically violates the provisions guaranteed under Section 15.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Bhutanese refugees have spent 17 years living in refugee camps. To date, the only offer on the table is that of resettlement. The Hindu American Foundation urges Bhutan to repatriate all its nationals who are able to prove their nationality, while Nepal should come forward with a similar offer to integrate some refugees. We support other human rights agencies’ call that “ultimately, each and every refugee should have the right to choose their own future”.^{lxxxii}

"We encourage the governments of Bhutan and Nepal to continue to work together with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) to fulfill their commitment to find a comprehensive and lasting solution to the situation," stated Honourable Peter MacKay, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Minister of the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency.

According to ACHR, Bhutan has not provided a written commitment to take back the refugees who have proven their citizenship, and joint verification was conducted only in one out of the seven refugee camps. Without a written commitment, there is no guarantee that Bhutan will take back its nationals.

HAF supports the recommendations made by ACHR and other human rights agencies like HRW and Amnesty International:^{lxxxiii}

- “Bhutan must take practical and concrete steps to demonstrate its stated commitment to a just resolution of the longstanding refugee crisis.”
- “Bhutan, Nepal and UNHCR should adopt a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) for voluntary repatriation that includes a clear statement of rights and entitlements upon the refugees’ return to Bhutan - including full citizenship rights and human rights protections.”
- “An accelerated and simplified verification exercise needs to be carried out in the six camps which have not yet been screened, based on two categories only: Bhutanese and non-Bhutanese.”
- “Donors, UN agencies and Bhutan's other partners should insist on measures to eliminate discrimination against Lhotshampas who have remained in Bhutan since the exodus of refugees, and to ensure the protection of their fundamental human

rights and their right to participate as full citizens of Bhutan.”

- “Bhutan’s development partners should urge the King to exercise his royal prerogative to regularize the nationality status of Lhotshampas who have no prospect of claiming any nationality other than Bhutanese.”
- “Donors should provide increased support for new programs and projects in the south of Bhutan and the east of Nepal to create new economic and educational opportunities which do not discriminate in purpose or effect, including on the basis of race or ethnicity; and to facilitate voluntary repatriation and local integration.”

Republic of the Fiji Islands

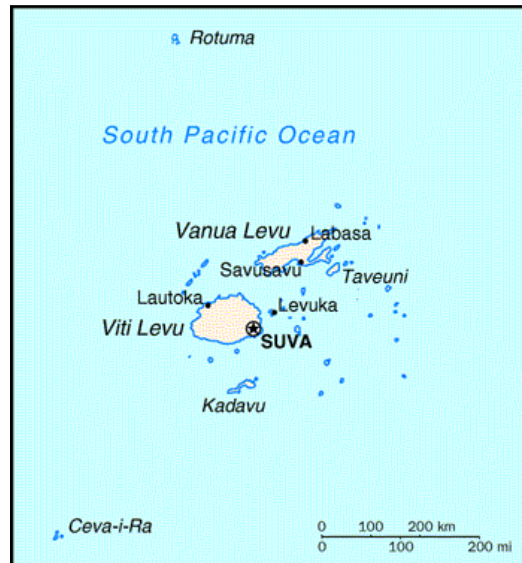


Figure 3: Map of the Republic of the Fiji Islands

© CIA World Factbook

Area: 18,270 sq. km.

Population: 918,675 (July 2007 est.)

Religions: Christian 53% (Methodist 34.5%, Roman Catholic 7.2%, Assembly of God 3.8%, Seventh Day Adventist 2.6%, other 4.9%), Hindu 34% (Santa 25%, Arya Samaj 1.2%, other 7.8%), Muslim 7% (Sunni 4.2%, other 2.8%), other or unspecified 5.6%, none 0.3% (1996 census)

Languages: English (official), Fijian, Hindi

Ethnic groups: Fijian 54.8% (predominantly Melanesian with a Polynesian admixture), Indian 37.4%, other 7.9% (European, other Pacific Islanders, Chinese) (2005 est.)

Location: Oceania, island group in the South Pacific Ocean, about two-thirds of the way from Hawaii to New Zealand^{lxxxiv}

Introduction

The condition of Hindus improved in Fiji in 2007. Despite promises of police protection and swift action, however, there were some reported incidents of temple sacrilege that underscore the tenuous nature of relationship among the religious faith communities in the country.

Fiji consists of over 300 islands, 100 of which are inhabited. Most of the population is concentrated on the main island of Viti Levu. The first inhabitants of Fiji reportedly arrived 3,000 years ago from Southeast Asia. The first European, Dutch explorer Abel Tasman, arrived in Fiji in 1643. Not until the 19th Century did the Europeans permanently settle on the islands. The islands came under British control as a colony in 1874 and became independent in 1970.

Fijians have experienced turbulent governance with democratic rule interrupted by two military coups in 1987. A primary causative factor for the coups in both cases was demagogic manipulation of the fears of the Christian majority Melanesian-Polynesian population that the government was dominated by the Indian community (descendants of contract laborers brought to the islands by the British in the 19th century). The military coup leader Maj. Gen. Sitiveni Rabuka formally declared Fiji a republic on October 6, 1987. A 1990 constitution favored native Melanesian control of Fiji, but led to heavy Indian emigration; the population loss resulted in economic difficulties, but ensured that Melanesians became the majority. Amendments enacted in 1997 made the constitution more equitable. Free and peaceful elections in 1999 resulted in a government led by an Indo-Fijian, but a coup in May 2000 that again appealed to anti-Indian/anti-Hindu ethno-religious insecurities ushered in a prolonged period of political turmoil. Parliamentary elections held in August 2001 provided Fiji with a democratically elected government and gave a mandate to the government of Prime Minister Laisenia Qarase. Re-elected in May 2006, Qarase was ousted in a December 2006 military coup led by Commodore Voreqe Bainimarama, who initially appointed himself acting president. In January 2007, Bainimarama was appointed interim prime minister.^{lxxxv}

Among the three major religions in Fiji, there are 471,093 Christians, 344,260 Hindus, and 47,475 Muslims. The largest Christian denomination is the Methodists with 174,304 members.^{lxxxvi} The Roman Catholic Church and Protestant denominations also have significant followings. The Methodist Church is supported by the majority of the country's chiefs and remains influential in the ethnic Fijian community, particularly in rural areas.

Religion runs largely along ethnic lines. The population is split largely between two main ethnic groups: Indigenous Fijians constitute approximately 51%, and Indo-Fijians constitute 44%. Most Indo-Fijians practice Hinduism; most indigenous Fijians follow Christianity. The European community is predominantly Christian. Other ethnic communities include the Chinese, Rotumans, Europeans, and other Pacific Islanders.^{lxxxvii}

Hindus are the second largest religious community in Fiji constituting approximately 34% of the total population, and approximately 76% of the Indian community.^{lxxxviii} Hindus were initially brought to Fiji in 1879 by the British colonists as part of the indentured labor system to work on the sugar cane plantations. This brutal practice, akin to slavery, was finally abolished in 1916, but discrimination against Hindus has continued, abetted by the state.

During British rule, socio-economic preeminence and advantages were accorded mostly to those Indians who had converted to Christianity, and after independence in 1970, ministerial positions in the cabinet were only offered to the Fijian Christian members of parliament. The progressive Prime Minister Dr. Timoci Bavadra temporarily abrogated this practice in 1987, but after military coups in May and October of the same year, Fiji reverted to old discriminatory practices.

The 1990 Constitution under Sitiveni Rabuka effectively barred any Hindu from holding the office of the Prime Minister. However, continued international pressure and domestic unrest resulted in the revision of the Constitution in 1997. The Constitution review, led by Sir Paul Reeves, removed the discriminatory practices embedded in the Constitution thereby paving the way for a new era in Fijian political history.

The subsequent 1999 elections saw the emergence of the first Hindu Prime Minister, Mahendra Chaudhary, who was overthrown a year later by a Fijian fanatic and U.S.-educated failed businessman, George Speight. Since 2000, violence against Hindus has increased and threatened their fundamental right to practice their faith. As the latest Amnesty International report on Fiji notes, "Discrimination against ethnic minorities was evident in plans for an indigenous Trust Fund and in the appointment of indigenous Fijians to almost all chief executive posts in the public service."^{lxxxix}

Commodore Josaia Voreqe (Frank) Bainimarama, Commander of the Republic of Fiji Military Forces, cited corruption in staging a coup on December 5, 2006 against the Prime Minister whom he had installed after the 2000 coup. This coup followed two in 1987 and one in 2000. Bainimarama took over the powers of the president and dissolved the parliament, paving the way for the military to assume power.

The coup came after a prolonged conflict between Prime Minister Laisenia Qarase and Commodore Bainimarama over pending legislation to pardon those involved in the 2000 coup. A series of ultimatums were issued by Bainimarama that the pardons should not be issued; however, the crisis was not resolved. Following the coup, the Commonwealth held an emergency meeting and suspended Fiji's membership. On January 4, 2007, the military announced that it was restoring executive power to President Iloilo, who in turn endorsed the actions of the military. The next day, Iloilo named Bainimarama as the interim Prime Minister.

Status of Human Rights of Hindus in Fiji, 2007

As we reported in the 2006 report, interim Prime Minister, Commodore Bainimarama, had condemned the government of Fiji for the continued attacks on Hindu temples. While HAF does not endorse or support military coups, after the installation of the new interim government on December 5, 2006 there has been a steady decline in attacks on Hindu temples. But Human Rights Watch, in a letter to the Fijian President, demanded “an independent investigation into the death of a person in military custody and allegations of arbitrary detentions, beatings, and harassment of more than a dozen individuals by the military should be a first step towards helping to restore confidence.”^{xc}

The interim Prime Minister met with HAF leaders when he visited San Francisco in October 2007. HAF leaders also met with Mason Smith, the Deputy Permanent Representative of the Permanent Mission of Fiji to the United Nations on January 30, 2008. The meeting enabled HAF to initiate an in-depth discussion of religious tolerance and pluralism. “The Permanent Mission of Fiji to the United Nations was pleased to meet with the Hindu American Foundation (HAF) and supports HAF’s human rights work in promoting pluralism and tolerance amongst the world’s religions,” said Smith.

While the Fijian leaders have assured the protection and safety of Hindus, there were reports of sacrilege of Hindu temples.^{xc} Arya Pratinidhi Sabha president Kamlesh Arya said there had been more than 50 cases of temple sacrilege between January and September 2007.^{xcii}

Hindus in Fiji constitute 34% of the population and their numbers are steadily declining due to heavy migration to United States, Australia and New Zealand. The year 2007, however, represented a new and positive turn in the human rights condition of Hindus in Fiji. While Hindus continue to face challenges, and there were reported attacks on Hindu temples, the promise and assurances of the leaders seemed genuine.

Violations of Constitution and UN Covenants

Although the Constitution of Fiji establishes the separation of religion and state, the U.S. State Department mentioned in its 2006 Report on Human Rights Practices of Fiji that, “the majority of citizens (52 percent) are Christian, and government-sponsored meetings and events often begin with a Christian prayer.” It also noted that, “Racial polarization was reflected in religious differences, which were largely along ethnic lines; this contributed to political problems. Most ethnic Fijians were Christians, and most Indo Fijians were Hindu.... The dominant Methodist Church has closely allied itself with the interests of the pro-indigenous Fijian movement,” and “break-ins, vandalism, and arson directed at houses of worship, predominantly Hindu temples, were common. The attacks were broadly viewed as reflections of intercommunal strife....”^{xciii}

Section 30 of the Constitution limits the right of freedom of expression to protect “the reputation, privacy, dignity, rights or freedoms of other persons, including the right to be free from hate speech, whether directed against individuals or groups” and to “prevent attacks on the dignity of individuals, groups or communities or respected offices or institutions in a manner likely to promote ill will between races or communities or the oppression of, or discrimination against, any person or persons.” Unfortunately, the Fijian government is not upholding this constitutional guarantee as Christian groups condemn Hindus as “idol worshippers” and promote anti-Hindu sentiment that clearly advances “ill will between communities.” Section 35, which is not supported by the Methodist Church, states, “(1) Every person has the right to freedom of conscience, religion and belief. (2) Every person has the right, either individually or in community with others, and both in public and in private, to manifest his or her religion or belief in worship, observance, practice or teaching.”

Conclusion and Recommendations

Despite constitutional guarantees and government assurances, Hindu temples continue to be desecrated by people suspected to belong to Fijian Christian groups. The Fijian government should practice parity and equality in government response to and support of various ethnic and religious groups, more effectively deal with violent crimes against Hindus, and prosecute the criminals who led the 2000 coup.

Although Fiji has not taken any action toward ratifying or signing the U.N. International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (CCPR), it has agreed to the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination. The government must do more to uphold the convention as Hindus and Muslims continue to be targets of Fijian Christian nationalists. As noted earlier, the condition of Hindus improved in Fiji in 2007 and credit for the improvement has been given to Interim Prime Minister Bainimarama’s initiative in strict enforcement of laws and public guarantees of protecting Hindus.

Indian State of Jammu and Kashmir



Figure 4: Map of the Indian State of Jammu and Kashmir

© Embassy of India, Washington D.C.^{xciv}

Area: 85,807 square miles

Population: 7,718,700^{xcv}. The overall population in the Indian state of Jammu and Kashmir was estimated in 1981 at 7.7 million with Muslims (64.3%), Hindus (32.1%), Sikhs (2.16%), Buddhist (1.17%) and others, including Christians (0.26%).

Religions: Exact figures unavailable; majority Muslim with a large Hindu minority and smaller Sikh and Buddhist communities; close to 400,000 Hindus and Sikhs currently live as refugees in other parts of India.

Languages: Kashmiri, Gojari, Dogri

Location: Northern India, bordered by Pakistan on the west and China on the east

Introduction

Kashmir, known for its idyllic beauty, has historically been inhabited by Hindus and Buddhists, and was ruled by Hindu kings until 1339. During the next century, there was a struggle for supremacy in the region between various rulers of different ethnic and religious backgrounds. The Muslim period stretched from about 1561 to 1819, at which

time Sikhs gained control over the region. Sikh rule spanned from 1819 to 1846, followed by the Hindu Dogra reign from 1846 to 1947. Modern Kashmir has been claimed by both Pakistan and India since partition of the subcontinent in 1947.^{xcvi}

The Princely State of Kashmir, which was ruled by the Dogra king Hari Singh at the time of partition, joined the Indian Union after Pakistan's armed forces orchestrated an invasion of Kashmir using Pashtun "tribesmen" and regular military personnel. Following the Pakistani offensive, Hari Singh signed the Instrument of Accession formalizing Kashmir's legal accession to India.^{xcvii} The Instrument of Accession was the standard legal mechanism used by the Princely States of British India to join either India or Pakistan at the time of independence in 1947.^{xcviii} The accession was also approved by the largest and most popular Kashmiri political party, the All Jammu and Kashmir National Conference, led by the charismatic Muslim leader Sheikh Mohammed Abdullah.

Once Kashmir legally joined India, Indian forces were deployed to stop the advancing Pakistani military, leading to an all out war between the two countries.^{xcix}

India then sought the intervention of the United Nations (UN), and the UN Commission for India and Pakistan (UNCIP) was established to examine the situation. In April 1948, the UN Security Council passed Resolution 47, which required (1) the demilitarization of the region and (2) a plebiscite to decide the future of the princely state. The Resolution, however, clearly required that Pakistan must first withdraw all its military personnel and "tribesmen" from the state, as a necessary pre-condition to holding a plebiscite.^c According to the UNCIP's findings in August 1948, Pakistan not only failed to abide by the Resolution, but actually increased its military presence in Kashmir.^{ci} Despite Pakistan's military aggression and flagrant violation of Resolution 47, the Security Council failed to take appropriate action against the government of Pakistan.

After a ceasefire was agreed to in January 1949, Pakistan remained in control of approximately one-third of the state, while the other two-thirds was incorporated into India under Article 370 of the Indian constitution. The Indian Constitution, which came into effect on January 26, 1950 granted special status to Kashmir through Article 370. Article 370 is a special clause that made "Jammu and Kashmir a country within a country, with its own flag, emblem, constitution and Sadr-i-Riyasat (Prime Minister)."^{cii} Moreover, it restricted the Indian Parliament's legislative power over Jammu and Kashmir to defense, foreign affairs, and communications. Thus, in order for the Parliament to apply other laws to Jammu and Kashmir, it required the State's concurrence. Although there was considerable opposition to granting special status to

the state, India's first Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru insisted on the inclusion of Article 370 to accommodate Muslim Kashmiris.^{ciii}

Subsequently, local elections were held in Indian Kashmir in 1951, where Sheikh Abdullah's National Conference won a resounding victory. And in 1956, the Jammu and Kashmir Constituent Assembly voted to approve the merger of Kashmir with India.^{civ}

The former princely State of Jammu and Kashmir has a total area of 85,807 sq. miles, and is now divided between three countries.^{cv} Pakistan occupies approximately 28,160 sq. miles, known as Pakistan occupied Kashmir (POK) or the paradoxically named Azad (free) Jammu and Kashmir (AJK), and the Northern Areas. POK comprises eight administrative districts (Muzaffarabad, Mirpur, Neelum, Kotli, Poonch, Sudhanoti, Bhimber and Bagh) with an area of 5,134 sq. miles and an estimated population of 3.5 million.^{cvi} The people of PoK are mostly Sunni Muslims speaking a mix of Punjabi, Pahari and Pushto. **There are virtually no Hindus left in PoK.** The Northern Areas have a Shia Muslim majority population with significant numbers of Ismailis and Nurbakshis (a Sufi sect). Shia-Sunni tensions have frequently run high here and there have been periodic riots.

China controls a total of 16,500 sq. miles, of which 2,000 sq. miles in the Shaksgam Valley was ceded to China by Pakistan in a 1963 boundary settlement (which India does not accept). The remaining 14,500 sq. miles, known as Aksai Chin was seized by China during the 1962 Indo-China war. Chinese occupied Kashmir is predominantly Buddhist.^{cvi}

And finally, the remaining territory forms the Indian state of Jammu and Kashmir, which is divided into three main parts: Kashmir Valley, Jammu, and Ladakh. According to estimates, the state's population is 7.7 million, with Muslims (64.3%), Hindus (32.1%), Sikhs (2.16%), Buddhist (1.17%) and others, including Christians (0.26%).^{cvi}

The Kashmir Valley has six districts with an area of 6,157 sq. miles and a population of just over four million. The main language is Kashmiri with Gojari being spoken to a lesser extent. Most Valley Muslims are Sunni with concentrations of Shias in certain areas. The Jammu region also includes six districts with an area of 10,151 sq. miles and a population of 3.6 million. In Jammu, Hindus comprise 66.3% of the population, Muslims 29.6%, and Sikhs 3.68%. Ladakh, which includes the districts of Leh and Kargil, has an area of 37,337 sq. miles and a population of 171,000. Buddhists comprise a slight majority in Ladakh (51%), with a substantial Muslim population of 46%, and Hindus, Sikhs, and others at 3%.^{cix}

Starting in 1989, Islamic terrorism gripped the Kashmir Valley, and a brutal campaign of violence and ethnic cleansing was directed against the state's minority Hindu population. As a result, between 1989 and 1991, more than 300,000 Hindus were driven out of the Valley by Muslim extremists (some estimates put the figure at close to 400,000). These Hindus, known as Kashmiri Pandits, now live in refugee camps throughout Delhi and Jammu.^{cx} Although the violence initially targeted the Kashmiri Pandits in the Valley, Islamic militants expanded their operations to attack Hindu civilians throughout the state.

The Islamic militants in Kashmir were recruited, trained, funded and given refuge by Pakistan's military and powerful Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) agency. According to noted Pakistani scholar Husain Haqqani, the violence in Kashmir was "rooted in the ideology of Pakistani Islamists, carefully nurtured for decades by the Pakistani military."^{cx} In fact, the founder and former head of the outlawed Lashkar-e-Taiba affirmed that "killing Hindus" was the best solution to resolve the six-decades-old dispute between Pakistan and India over Kashmir.^{cxii} Kashmiri terrorists also have ties with Al-Qaeda operating in the Pakistan-Afghanistan border areas, which continues to be the center of Islamist terror networks, fundamentalism, drug trafficking, illicit trade in small arms and international terrorism.^{cxiii}

Considering the Pakistani military's obsession with jihad in Kashmir, the explosion of Islamic fundamentalism, and the failure of the current civilian government to articulate a clear commitment to ceasing sponsorship of terror in Kashmir, the unreliability of General Musharraf, the future of Hindus in Kashmir remains tenuous.

Status of the Human Rights of Hindus in Jammu and Kashmir, 2007

The political situation in Kashmir remained unresolved in 2007 despite assertions of progress in resolving the six-decade old conflict between the governments of India and Pakistan. While some steps have been taken by both countries after the 2004 ceasefire to move towards a resolution, "the lack of any real progress on the more contentious issues – including delineating the land and boundaries and continuation of fragile relations – have not yet allowed the relationship to progress beyond the normalization process," according to a Carnegie Endowment for International Peace report.^{cxiv}

In April, the 3rd Round Table Conference on Jammu and Kashmir hosted by Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, and involving a number of Kashmiri groups and political parties, was held to discuss the current situation in the state. The Conference adopted a

number of steps to improve the conditions in Kashmir and of the Kashmiri people.^{cxv} Kashmiri Hindu groups, however, complained that the Conference failed to adequately address their grievances, including their right of return, and the illegal encroachment of Hindu owned properties and religious sites in the Valley.^{cxvi}

The security situation in Kashmir also remained tense, as Islamic extremists targeted innocent civilians throughout the state. Moreover, the Hindus displaced by the violence in 1989 have still not been able to safely return to their homes, eighteen years later. In addition, many of these displaced Hindus continue to live in abysmal conditions in refugee camps in Delhi and Jammu, with little hope for the future.

Attacks on Civilians

Pakistan-sponsored terrorists killed and injured a number of civilians during 2007. There were a total of 162 civilian fatalities from terrorist violence, with a far greater number of people injured. This figure was slightly down from 2006, when 349 civilians were killed by Muslim extremists.^{cxvii} In one particularly gruesome incident on March 30, four militants raided Panglar village in Rajouri district and forced a number of poor Hindu laborers out of their homes. The militants then lined the villagers up and opened fire on them, killing five and wounding four. Recently, Indian security posts had been withdrawn, as part of a demilitarization plan, from Panglar, and other remote mountainous villages in Rajouri and Poonch districts. Many of the Hindus living in these villages fear further terrorist violence, unless Indian forces return to the area.^{cxviii}

There were a number of barbaric attacks targeting Hindus in 2007, including the following:

- On January 6, 2007 two people were killed and 45 others including four soldiers were wounded in a powerful bomb blast in Pulwama district of Jammu and Kashmir. According to the police, terrorists tossed a grenade at a passing vehicle of the Rashtriya Rifles (RR) police force in the busy main market at Shopian.^{cxix}
- On March 30, 2007 terrorists shot dead five Hindu road workers and wounded three others. Police officials said that two Muslim terrorists “in camouflage fatigue” stormed into the workers’ camp near Rajouri district and opened indiscriminate fire.^{cxx}
- Fourteen people were injured when Muslim terrorists hurled grenades at a base camp of Amarnath pilgrims at Baltal, about 60 miles away from the capital Srinagar, on July 17, 2007.^{cxxi}
- On July 21, 2007 terrorists attacked Hindu pilgrims with hand grenades wounding 11 people in Pahalgam, a town on the pilgrimage route to the Amarnath shrine. The Islamic terrorists threw a grenade into a kitchen set up to

- feed the pilgrims, wounding 11 — three of them critically. Among the wounded were sadhus (Hindu ascetics).^{cxxii}
- On July 29, 2007 at least six people, including two children, were killed and 30 others injured in a powerful explosion on a tourist bus near Shalimar garden. The bus was carrying Hindu tourists from Gujarat.^{cxxiii}

According to data compiled by the South Asia Terrorism Portal there were a total of 777 deaths in Kashmir because of terrorism related violence. Of these 164 were civilian deaths, 121 were security and police personnel, and 492 were terrorists.^{cxxiv}

Internal Displacement

Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) are defined as “persons or groups of persons who have been forced or obliged to flee or to leave their homes or places of habitual residence, in particular as a result of or in order to avoid the effects of armed conflict, situations of generalized violence, violations of human rights or natural or human-made disasters, and who have not crossed an internally recognized state border.”^{cxxv}

By far the greatest tragedy to befall Kashmiri Hindus was their forced displacement from Kashmir. Over 95% of the Hindu population in the Kashmir Valley (350,000 people) became internally displaced between 1989 and 1991, as they were forced to flee their historic homeland by Muslim extremists. There was an organized and systematic campaign to cleanse Hindus from Kashmir, including massacres, rapes, threats and intimidation. Public announcements were placed in newspapers, sermons made in mosques, and posters hung on houses, ordering all Kashmiri Hindus to leave the Valley, and threatening violence if they did not.^{cxxvi}

After that initial displacement, 160 of the remaining 700 Hindu families in the Valley were also forced to leave after increased violence and attacks occurred between 2003 and 2004.^{cxxvii}

In order to accommodate the large numbers of Hindus fleeing the Valley, the Indian government set up semi-permanent camps for the displaced in Jammu and New Delhi. These camps, however, are overcrowded, and lack adequate facilities and basic necessities. For instance, there is no regular supply of drinking water, a shortage of medicines, and poor sanitation. Additionally, the education and employment opportunities are severely lacking. As a result of the substandard conditions, the Kashmiri Pandits, after years of displacement, have faced serious health problems, including high incidence of disease, depression, stress-related problems, and a high death rate.^{cxxviii}

Although the Indian government, as well as the local state government in Kashmir, has discussed plans to rehabilitate the displaced Pandits to the Valley, these plans have not yet been implemented. Furthermore, while Hindus are keen to return, Pandit leaders are skeptical of the government's rehabilitation plans, and their ability to provide protection to Hindus upon return.^{cxxix}

Islamic militant groups have rejected the Pandits' right to return, and have issued threats against Hindus if they return. For example, one extremist group publicly stated that, "We impose a ban on the return of Kashmiri Pandit migrants to the Valley." This indicates that the security situation in the Valley remains tenuous, and Hindus cannot yet safely return to their homes.^{cxxx}

Hindu Pilgrimage Sites/Temples

There are several ancient Hindu pilgrimage sites and temples located throughout Kashmir. Due to their popularity, these pilgrimage sites are visited by millions of devotees every year. The two most frequented sites are Vaishno Devi in Jammu and the Amarnath cave shrine in northern Kashmir. Despite heavy security, Muslim fundamentalists have frequently attacked these sites and visiting pilgrims.

These attacks continued in 2007, with two incidents occurring within a one week period in July. Both terrorist attacks targeted pilgrims en route to the Amarnath cave shrine. The first attack occurred when Islamic insurgents launched grenades at the entrance of the Baltal base camp, which provides accommodations for Hindu devotees visiting the shrine. In that attack, one person was killed and 16 were injured. The second attack, which injured 11 people, was at a community kitchen set up to feed Hindu pilgrims in the town of Pahalgam.^{cxxxi}

Hindu Temples have also been targeted by Islamic extremists, as over 200 temples have been destroyed or damaged since the start of violence in 1989. In addition, over 100 religious premises have been illegally occupied by Muslims in the Kashmir Valley, following the mass exodus of Hindus. For instance, according to a fact-finding mission, the cremation site and temple land of Karihama-Gutingu in Kupwara district, Batpura and Kapalmochan temples in Shopian district and Shiv temple at Thejiwara, have all been illegally seized.^{cxxxii}

Violations of Constitution and UN Covenants

Constitution of India

Despite India's secular Constitution, Hindus in Jammu and Kashmir have been constant targets of violent Islamist militants. Article 15 prohibits discrimination "against any citizen on grounds only of religion, race, caste, sex, place of birth or any of them." Life and personal liberty are protected by Article 21, which maintains that "No person shall be deprived of his life or personal liberty except according to procedure established by law."^{cxviii} Life and liberties of the Hindus in the Kashmir Valley have not been protected or preserved by the Indian Government. As noted above, militants in the Valley have ruthlessly murdered Hindus, and the continual threat of death hinders their return to their homeland. Article 38 states, "The State shall strive to promote the welfare of the people by securing and protecting as effectively as it may a social order in which justice, social, economic and political, shall inform all the institutions of the national life."^{cxix} Once again, the Indian Government has failed to secure the promise of Article 38. Neither have the Hindus in Kashmir been protected nor have the Hindus who fled the region been provided with adequate support or security. The approximately 350,000 individuals who fled the Kashmir Valley live in refugee settlements dispersed throughout India in abysmal conditions. These Kashmiri Hindus are living as refugees in their own country despite a constitutional promise to protect their welfare, rights, and liberties.

International Law

Pakistan's direct support of militancy and/or proxy terrorism in Indian Kashmir is a violation of U.N. Covenants governing terrorism, such as the International Convention for the Suppression of Terrorist Bombing, and the International Convention for the Suppression of the Financing of Terrorism.^{cxv} A number of these Pakistan-based groups have been labeled as terrorist organizations by the United Kingdom and the United States. For instance, the UK has banned five militant organizations -- Harakat-ul-Jihad-ul-Islami, Jundallah, Khuddam ul-Islam, Lashkar-e Jhangvi (LeJ) and Sipah-e Sahab Pakistan (SSP).^{cxvi} The United States has also designated LeJ, Harakat ul-Mujahidin (HuM), Jaish-e-Mohammed (JeM) and Lashkar-e-Tayyiba (LT) as terrorist organizations.^{cxvii}

India's accession to the UN's International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (CCPR) occurred on July 10, 1979 and its ratification of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination took place on March 2, 1967.^{cxviii} Once again, the Indian government upholds neither of these UN covenants. Most importantly, Article 27 of the CCPR, which protects the rights of "ethnic, religious or

linguistic minorities...to enjoy their own culture, to profess and practise (sic) their own religion, [and] to use their own language” has been violated time and time again in the Kashmir Valley as Hindus have been all but completely driven out of the region.^{cxix} The destruction of temples and frequent attacks on Hindu pilgrimage sites is another indication of the failure to protect Kashmiri Hindus under CCPR.

Finally, the UN Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement encompass the protections of international human rights law and humanitarian law as applied to internally displaced persons. The legal protections afforded to IDPs, however, are substantially weaker than that for refugees, who benefit from specialized international refugee law. Substantively, the Guiding Principles prohibit the arbitrary displacement of persons based on their religious and ethnic background, and affirm IDPs’ basic rights to food, water, shelter, dignity and safety. The principles also emphasize the “importance of voluntary and safe return, as well as the need to assist the displaced to recover their property and possessions.”^{cxl} The responsibility for preventing internal displacement and protecting the rights of the displaced persons lies with a country’s “national authorities,” according to the Guiding Principles. Consequently, the Indian government as the responsible “national authority,” has failed to protect the rights of the Kashmiri Pandits under this legal framework.^{cxli} Hindus living in displacement camps still face deplorable conditions, and have not been safely rehabilitated to their homes in the Valley. In addition, the Indian government refuses to label them as IDPs, instead referring to them as “migrants”. The term “migrant” is problematic as it implies that Hindus left Kashmir of their own volition, and denies the fact that they were forced to flee.^{cxlii}

Conclusion and Recommendations

As HAF noted in its 2006 report, the ethnic cleansing of Hindus from the Kashmir Valley is almost complete, and consequently, attacks against specific Hindu targets are more difficult to report. Still, Hindus continue to be the targets of wanton murder, terrorist attacks and intimidation. They are attacked in their homes, on vacation and during their pilgrimages. Hindus forced from the Valley continue to live in refugee camps throughout Northern India and the decrepit conditions of these communities remain a tragic abuse of fundamental rights to shelter and dignity.^{cxliii} The fate of up to 400,000 people continues to be in limbo as the Indian government strives to end the insurgency in Jammu and Kashmir. The status of Jammu and Kashmir as a “disputed area” will continue to affect the condition of Kashmiri Hindus. The fate of Hindus of this region remains in abeyance - paralyzed by the inertia of the Government of India, and a recalcitrant Pakistan unwilling to stop Islamic terrorists from carrying out attacks in the

region. The inflammatory rhetoric of Islamist terrorists based in Pakistan only vitiates the atmosphere further and perpetuates a dangerous terrorism that continues to claim Muslim and Hindus lives in the region. It is incumbent upon the Pakistani Government to cease moral and material support to all terrorists in the Kashmir Valley. India must create an atmosphere in the Kashmir Valley conducive to the return and safe resettlement of Hindus to their original homes throughout Jammu and Kashmir, and further dialogue with Pakistan must be predicated on this return of original Hindu residents.

Malaysia



Figure 5: Map of Malaysia

© CIA World Factbook

Area: 329, 750 sq km

Population: 24,821,286 (July 2007, est.). Malaysia has a young population today with approximately 34% of the population under the age of 15 years.^{cxliv}

Religions: Muslim 60.4%, Buddhist 19.2%, Christian 9.1%, Hindu 6.3%, Confucianism, Taoism, other traditional Chinese religions 2.6%, other or unknown 1.5%, none 0.8% (2000 census). Islam is the official religion of the country.

Ethnic groups: Malay (Bumiputra) 50.4%, Chinese 23.7%, indigenous 11%, Indian 7.1%, others 7.8% (2004 est.)

Languages: Bahasa Melayu (official), English, Chinese (Cantonese, Madarin), Tamil, Telugu, Malayalam, Punjabi, Thai, several indigenous languages (Iban and Kadazan)

Location: Southeastern Asia, peninsula bordering Thailand and northern one-third of the island of Borneo, bordering Indonesia, Brunei, and the South China Sea, south of Vietnam^{cxlv}

Introduction

The Indian and Chinese influence in the Malay-speaking world dates back to at least 3rd century BCE when traders from both regions arrived at the archipelago. Hinduism and Buddhism were both established in the region by the 1st century CE. Between the 7th and 14th centuries, the Indian Hindu culture reigned in the Malay world. During the 10th century, however, the arrival of Islam broke apart the Hindu empire and led to the conversion of most of the Malay-Indonesian world. The 16th century saw the arrival of the European colonizers, beginning with the Portuguese, followed by the Dutch, and ultimately the British. In 1824, the Anglo-Dutch created a border between British Malaysia and the Dutch East Indies, which is now Indonesia. This phase of occupation was followed by the mass immigration of Chinese and Indians who entered the country as workers in the colonial British economy. Between 1942 and 1945, the Japanese occupied the region, detracting power from the British in East Asia. Although short-lived, this occupation triggered feelings of nationalism, ultimately leading to the establishment of an independent Federation of Malaya in 1957. Upon the acquisition of British territories in North Borneo and Singapore, Malaya became Malaysia in 1963.^{cxlvi}

Status of Human Rights of Hindus in Malaysia, 2007

During 2007, the status of human rights in Malaysia suffered a precipitous decline. Most of the problems in Malaysia seem to be rooted in religious tension within the country. In “An Assessment of the People of Indian Origin in Malaysia”, P. Waytha Moorthy, the president of the Hindu Rights Action Force (HINDRAF) considers the violations in Malaysia. He mentions the frequent demolition of Hindu temples in Malaysia as well as the abuse of women and children. In fact, over the past year, nearly 80 temples have been demolished in Malaysia. He describes the “dilapidated” condition of Tamil schools in Malaysia, as the schools are deprived the promise of government aid.

Religious Freedom

One of the major human rights issues prevalent in Malaysia is the deterioration of religious freedom. This is due in part to the growing influence of Islamic law in the lives of non-Muslim citizens. Although Malaysia has a parallel court system: secular courts for non-Muslims and Sharia courts for Muslims, Hindus and other minorities have recently been forced to deal with the Islamic courts, where they have faced severe disadvantages. During 2007, there were several instances where non-Muslims suffered religious discrimination through the Islamic court system. In one case, a Hindu mother, Subashini Rajasingam, lost an appeal to prevent her husband, a recent Muslim convert, from changing their four year old son’s religion to Islam. The highest court in Malaysia affirmed the ruling of a lower federal court, which granted the Muslim husband a right

to use the Islamic Sharia courts to seek a divorce, and also upheld his right to convert their child to Islam without the mother's consent. As a result, the Hindu mother may lose legal custody over her child, since Malaysia's Islamic courts will not give custody of a Muslim child to a non-Muslim parent.^{cxlvii}

In another case, Revathi Massosai was ordered to spend six months in an Islamic rehabilitation center for the purposes of "re-embracing" her Islamic faith. Though Ms. Massosai's had parents converted to Islam before her birth, she was raised as a Hindu by her Hindu grandmother. In 2004, Ms. Massosai married Suresh Veerappan, a Hindu, according to Hindu rites, but did not register the marriage, as Malaysian law does not recognize marriage between a Muslim and a non-Muslim, unless the non-Muslim accepts Islam. When trying to register the birth of their daughter, Malaysian officials noticed that Ms. Massosai's documents still bore her Muslim name. The courts ordered her to spend six months in an Islamic center, and custody of her daughter was then taken from her and her husband, and given to her Muslim parents. Ms. Massosai, after her release, states that she had suffered mental and physical abuse at the center, but till date, has not regained custody of her child.^{cxlviii}

Other minorities, including Christians and Buddhists, have also faced problems in the Islamic Sharia courts. In one instance, Catholic convert, Lina Joy, tried unsuccessfully to officially change her faith from Islam to Christianity. After nine years of litigation, on May 30, the Supreme Court ruled that she would need permission from the *sharia* courts in order to remove Islam from her identity card. Her case highlights creeping Islamisation and the infringement of Article 11 of the Malaysian Constitution which states that "Every person has the right to profess and practice his religion."^{cxlix}

In another case, the religious court has "has ordered a Malaysian woman [Siti Fatimah] who is trying to renounce Islam to undergo three months of counseling." She is an ethnic Chinese woman who had converted from Buddhism to Islam because she was marrying an Iranian man. She claims though that she never truly practiced Islamic teachings, and has been formally trying to renounce Islam after abandonment by her husband.^{cl}

According to a report from the Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada, some of the cases of discrimination against Hindus included the following:^{cli}

- In February 2007, two siblings of Indian origin sought to have their religious status changed on their birth certificates, which currently define them as Muslims. Although they claim to be Hindus, the siblings have been unable to change their Muslim status through Malaysia's National Registration

Department.

- In May 2007, Islamic authorities in the state of Selangor forcefully separated a Hindu man from his Muslim wife, but in another decision, granted him custody of the children.
- In the summer of 2007, Brussels-based Human Rights Without Frontiers (HRWF) reported two incidents in which Hindus were punished for actions considered "illegal under Islam" (August 13, 2007). In July 2007, a woman who converted from Islam to Hinduism reported that she was "mentally tortured by Islamic religious police" over the course of a six-month detention in a "state-run Islamic counselling centre." Sharia courts in Malaysia do not allow Muslims to renounce their religion; apostates are reportedly sent to counselling and, if they do not cooperate, can be fined or jailed. According to Reuters, "[s]uch people often end up in legal limbo, unable to register their new religious affiliations or legally marry non-Muslims," and "[m]any keep quiet about their choice or emigrate."
- In August 2007, Islamic religious police reportedly freed an ethnic Indian Muslim woman after four months of detention for marrying a Hindu; however, "Islamic authorities" ordered the couple to live separately since their marriage was considered un-Islamic.

Temple Demolition

In a continuing trend from 2006, the biggest concern of Hindus in Malaysia was the destruction of their temples. However, because of the public outcry and international attention to the destruction of Hindu temples, the pace of temple destruction seemed to have slowed down in 2007. According to HINDRAF sources, at least one temple was destroyed every three weeks in 2006.^{clii} "The conduct of the Malaysian authorities has been particularly offensive," India's former external affairs minister, Yashwant Sinha told the Indian media. "Even the country's official history starts with the 14th century after the last Hindu king converted to Islam. They want to obliterate their past."^{cliii}

One of the most controversial temple demolitions was the demolition of the Maha Mariamman Temple in Padang Jawa in October, 2007.^{cliv} Built in 1873 and dedicated to Goddess Maha Mariamman, it was the oldest Hindu temple in Malaysia. Carved images of deities adorned the temple's grand entrance, a 22-metre high pyramid-shaped tower.

According to Hindu activists, the temple had not received any official notice on the demolition other than being told the night before the incident. The representative from state government and Majlis Bandaraya Shah Alam (MBSA) verbally informed temple authorities the night before the demolition that they would be given few days to move

out before demolition. The devotees were unaware the temple would be destroyed the next morning.

Other temples that were demolished during 2007 are as follows:

- On 2/22/2007 -- the Sri Maha Nageswari Hindu Temple in Taman Cahaya 7, Ampang, Selangor Darul Ehsan
- On 5/15/2007 -- the JKR Sri Muniswarar Hindu Temple, Jalan Kapar, Klang
- On 6/13/2007 -- the Sri Kaliaman Hindu temple in Midlands estate, Shah Alam

Mistreatment of Hindus

The Indian Hindu minority suffers from economic, social and educational discrimination, while the majority Malaysian Muslims (bumiputras) benefit from an affirmative-action policy that provides discounts on housing, quotas on educational institutions, preference for government jobs, selection of government run mutual funds available only for bumiputra purchase, and projects that require tenders to be bumiputra owned. Likewise, companies listed on the Kuala Lumpur Stock Exchange, including foreign companies, must have bumiputras with at least 30% minimum equity in order to satisfy listing requirements. This further unevens the distribution of wealth, thereby leaving the Hindu minority at an increased economic disadvantage.

In November, HINDRAF arranged a rally in the capital “seeking reparations from the UK for bringing Indians to Malaysia as indentured labourers a century ago”^{clv} and improved living conditions for the Hindu community. The government banned the rally, and on November 23, detained three Hindraf leaders under the charge of sedition. Nearly 10,000 protestors attended the November 25 Kuala Lumpur rally. The government responded by virtually locking down Kuala Lumpur and firing tear gas, chemical laced water cannons and baton charges. Hundreds were beaten and arrested including several hundred gathered at the Batu Caves temple complex, one of the most sacred Hindu shrines in the country. Five leaders from Hindraf (P. Uthayakumar, M. Manoharan, R. Kenghadharan and V. Ganabatirau, and T. Vasantha Kumar) were arrested under the Internal Security Act (ISA), a law which allows for indefinite detention without trial. After 100 days of incarceration, formal charges have yet to be brought. These men have not been granted food according to their medical or religious requirements, medicine, time outside their cell and only limited visits by family members.

Initially, the government charged 31 men with attempted murder, later dropped those charges.

Violations of Constitution and UN Covenants

Malaysia restricts Freedom of Peaceful Assembly and Association contrary to Article 20 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) and Article 10 of the Malaysian Federal Constitution. Consequently, the application filed by Malaysian Indians to hold gatherings was arbitrarily rejected by the police. The Malaysian government tried to suppress a campaign launched by HINDRAF to obtain 100,000 signatures in support of a civil suit against the Government of the United Kingdom. HINDRAF has accused Malaysian officials of intimidating and instilling fear in the Indian community under the following conditions:

- a) Threat of arrest under the draconian Internal Security Act.
- b) Threat to demolish temples (if gatherings are held in the temples).
- c) Threat of arrest and criminal prosecution of venue owners for aiding in holding events.
- d) Sealing of temples and all access roads leading to the temples.
- e) Placing hundreds of riot police fully armed near the temple premises, etc.

Malaysia has not taken any action toward signing or ratifying the United Nation's International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights or the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination.

Malaysia's Constitution upholds Islam as "the religion of the Federation,"^{clvi} but provides for the practice of other religions "in peace and harmony." Part II of the Constitution defines the fundamental liberties of people, which include the right to equality before the law; the right to freedom of speech and peaceful assembly; and the right to "prove and practice his religion." The Constitution also guarantees that every religious group may "manage its own religious affairs, establish and maintain institutions for religious or charitable purposes, and acquire and own property and hold and administer it in accordance with law." Furthermore, religious groups hold the right "to establish and maintain institutions for education of children in its own religion" although the Federation retains the right to "establish or maintain or assist in establishing or maintaining Islamic institutions." Additionally, the Constitution mandates that no individual is "required to receive instruction in or take part in any ceremony or act of worship of a religion other than his own." Clearly, state-sponsored temple destruction

and infringements on personal religious freedom seen in Malaysia today are direct violations of the aforementioned guarantees enshrined in the nation's Constitution.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Over the past decade, the rights of minorities in Malaysia have eroded as the government shifts from its seemingly secular state to one that is rooted in conservative Islam. Religious freedom is not protected and for ethnic Malays, does not exist at all. Three urgent concerns are the lack of freedom of religion, the ongoing destructions of temples and the continuing detention of five HINDRAF. The Malaysia Supreme Court should abide by Article 11 in the constitution and not enforce religion upon residents of Malaysia. The U.S., UN and various human rights groups should pressure the Malaysian government to protect Hindu temples from desecration and destruction — the primary institutions of the Hindu community in Malaysia. Hindu places of worship that existed prior to independence should be designated as temple property and title to the land should be handed to the respective temple trustees/committees as has been done for pre-independence era mosques. The Malaysian Government should be urged to not discriminate in the allocation of public funds and land for places of worship between Muslim and minority religious groups. In addition, the government should aid Tamil schools in Malaysia as they are required to do.

Islamic Republic of Pakistan



Figure 6: Map of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan

© CIA World Factbook

Area: 803,940 sq km

Population: 164,741,924 (July 2007 est.)

Religions: Muslim 97% (Sunni 77%, Shi'a 20%), other (includes Christian and Hindu) 3%

Ethnic groups: Punjabi, Sindhi, Pashtun (Pathan), Baloch, Muhajir (immigrants from India at the time of partition and their descendants)

Languages: Punjabi 48%, Sindhi 12%, Siraiki (a Punjabi variant) 10%, Pashtu 8%, Urdu (official) 8%, Balochi 3%, Hindko 2%, Brahui 1%, Other 8% (mainly English and Burushaski)

Location: Southern Asia, bordering the Arabian Sea, between India on the east and Iran and Afghanistan on the west and China in the north^{clvii}

Introduction

Pakistan is bordered on the south by the Arabian Sea, India on the east, and Afghanistan and Iran in the west. It has a number of diverse ethnic groups, including Punjabis, Sindhis, Balochis, Pashtuns, and Muhajirs. Punjabis comprise the largest group and dominate the ranks of the government and military. The pre-eminence and political power of the Punjabis has led to resentment from minorities, particularly Balochis and Sindhis, and at times resulted in ethnic conflict. Pakistan has also been plagued by sectarian violence between the majority Sunni and minority Shi'a Muslim communities.^{clviii}

The modern Pakistani state was created by partitioning the subcontinent in 1947, following the British withdrawal from India. Partition and the accompanying violence forced millions of Hindus and Sikhs to flee Pakistan for the safety of India. As a result, the number of Hindus in Pakistan began to rapidly decline. For instance, at the time of Partition in 1947, the Hindu community in Pakistan was approximately 25%, and in 1998, it was down to only 1.6%.^{clix} In the city of Karachi alone, the Hindu population decreased from 51% in 1947, to only 2% in 1951, while the Muslim population in the city went from 42% to 96% during that same period.^{clx}

At independence, Pakistan proclaimed itself an Islamic republic. Since then, Islam has become a central part of the country's national ideology and legal framework. Although the Constitution provides for freedom of religion, that freedom is severely limited and "subject to law, public order, and morality." Consequently, actions or speech deemed derogatory to Islam or Prophet Mohammed are not protected. Moreover, the Constitution requires that laws be consistent with Islam and imposes elements of Koranic law on both Muslims and non-Muslims alike.^{clxi}

During the last several years, the rights of Pakistani minorities have deteriorated at an alarming pace. I. A. Rehman, Director of the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan, associates this erosion with the continued Islamization of the country initiated by former President General Zia-ul-Haq in the 1980s. Consequently, minorities live in constant fear of threats to their lives and property, desecrations of their places of worship, and punishment under the Blasphemy Act.^{clxii} Nuzzhat Shirin of the Aurat Foundation adds: "It's Muslims winning by intimidation. It's Muslims overcoming a culture by threatening it, by abducting young girls so that an entire community moves out or succumbs to the Muslim murderers."^{clxiii} Pakistani Bishop T. Nasir renounced his Pakistani nationality to protest deteriorating human rights conditions. In an emotionally-charged plea to President Musharraf, he stated he experienced "extreme

hate, religious discrimination, intolerance for the Christian community at every level of Islamic society of Pakistan.”^{clxiv} Noted human rights activist Suhas Chakma went even further by describing the current system in Pakistan as “religious apartheid”.^{clxv}

Hindus in Pakistan

Hindus make up a small and vulnerable religious minority in this officially Islamic country. According to the Minorities at Risk (MAR) group, “Hindus are most concentrated in the Sindh province of southeast Pakistan.”^{clxvi} The report explains that before the partition of India in 1947, “most Hindus in present-day Pakistan were urban, highly educated and economically advantaged. However, most middle-class and upper-class Pakistani Hindus immigrated to India after the 1947 partition of the sub-continent. Those who remained tended to be poorer and rural. Lacking the resources to organize politically (large numbers are bonded labor), Hindus have remained politically and economically marginalized in Pakistan.”^{clxvii}

Hindus are the target of kidnappings, rape, and intimidation in Pakistan. There are also reports of desecration and destruction of Hindu temples and lands, theft/looting of Hindu property, discrimination, abuse, and abduction of Hindu females. Additionally, many Pakistani Hindus suffer under the cruel and inhumane bonded labor system.

Furthermore, government regulations and laws shaped by Islamic Sharia injunctions persecute Hindus, and other religious minorities. For instance, Islamic anti-blasphemy laws disproportionately affect Hindus, Christians and Ahmadis.^{clxviii} Unfortunately, few reports about specific and targeted human rights abuses against Hindus are available, due to their small population, and poor coverage in the media.

Until recently, Pakistani Hindus had not organized politically. From the 1990s onwards however, Hindus became more assertive and joined alliances with other religious minorities. In 2002, they joined Christians and other groups to form the All Pakistan Minorities Alliance (APMA). Moreover, organizations such as the Pakistan Hindu Welfare Association and coalitions of Hindu *panchayats* (local councils of elders) have led in political organizing.^{clxix}

Hindus and other minorities achieved a rare political victory in 2002 with the removal of separate electorates for Muslims and non-Muslims. The separate electorate system had marginalized non-Muslims by depriving them of adequate representation in the assemblies. The Pakistan Hindu Welfare Association was active by convening a national conference on the issue in December 2000. And in 2001, Hindus, Christians, and Ahmadis successfully conducted a partial boycott of the elections, culminating in the

abolishment of the separate electorate system in 2002. This allowed religious minorities to vote for mainstream seats in the National and Provincial assemblies, rather than being confined to voting for only minority seats.^{clxx} Despite the victory, however, Hindus still remain largely disenfranchised.

Status of Human Rights in Pakistan, 2007

2007 was a tumultuous year in Pakistan, marred by widespread violence, political repression, and human rights abuses. Starting in March, General Musharraf suspended Supreme Court Chief Justice, Iftikhar Muhammad Chaudhry, in a politically motivated decision, and reinstated him in July under intense domestic and international pressure.^{clxxi} In November emergency rule was imposed by Musharraf, which included suspension of the constitution, restrictions on the media, wide police powers, and replacement of the Supreme Court.^{clxxii} The Supreme Court justices were placed under house arrest, including the sole Hindu Justice Rana Bhagwandas. Reports have indicated that Justice Bhagwandas, who suffers from a heart condition, was not allowed to leave his house.^{clxxiii} Additionally, several human rights activists and lawyers were arrested, while prominent activist Asma Jehangir of the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan (HRCP) was placed under house arrest.^{clxxiv} According to the Asian Human Rights Commission (AHRC), during the initial three days of emergency rule, approximately 3500 lawyers and 500 activists were placed under arrest.^{clxxv} The political turmoil culminated in December with the assassination of Benazir Bhutto, the former Prime Minister and leader of the opposition PPP, at a political rally in the garrison city of Rawalpindi. Following the assassination, riots and violence gripped several cities, resulting in the deaths of 40 people and widespread destruction of businesses.^{clxxvi}

Islamist groups and parties also made substantial gains in power and influence, particularly in the North West Frontier Province (NWFP) and the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) on the border with Afghanistan. This led to the implementation and enforcement of strict Islamic Sharia law in substantial parts of these areas. For instance, lawmakers in NWFP recently approved the Hisbah Act (Sharia legislation) to establish a commission to suppress vice, similar to the Saudi and Taliban models. The Act also included the creation of a separate police force to execute and impose its orders. Mushtaq Ahmed Ghani, legislator from the opposition Pakistan Muslim League-Q party, fears that “this bill will encourage steps for the Talibanization of the province.”^{clxxvii} In addition, there has been a recent explosion of Islamic schools, known as *madrasas* in the past fifty years. Current estimates show that there are over 10,000 *madrasas* in Pakistan, whereas in 1956 there were only 244. Many of these schools teach extreme and intolerant interpretations of Islam to children as young as five years old.^{clxxviii}

The ascendancy of Islamists has also produced an upsurge in violence by Muslims fundamentalists targeting the military and civilians throughout the country. Violence particularly escalated following the standoff at the radical Red Mosque in Islamabad between Muslim extremists and government forces in early July.^{clxxix}

In addition, the desperate human rights plight of religious minorities continued in 2007 without significant improvement. In particular, Hindus suffered several attacks, including kidnappings and forced conversions, primarily in Sindh province. In response to the growing violence directed against the Hindu community in Sindh, Hindu leaders came together to form the Sindh Minority Alliance, in early 2007.^{clxxx} Furthermore, in August, the All Pakistan Minorities Alliance released a Charter of Demands insisting on equal rights for minority communities and an end to forced conversions and blasphemy laws.^{clxxxi}

Violence against Women

Violence against women is a serious problem throughout the world, but more so in Pakistan, particularly against Hindu women. This violence occurs primarily in the form of rape, honor killings, and domestic abuse. In Pakistan, a woman is raped every two hours on average, a gang-rape occurs every eight hours, and about 1,000 women die annually from honor killings. The Asian Human Rights Commission estimates that, "From 2000 to 2006, roughly 9379 women were killed throughout Pakistan in different disputes including 117 from rape. There were another 3116 cases of reported rape, 1260 gang rapes, 4572 honor killings, while 1503 women were burned to death."^{clxxxii} These statistics only account for those crimes that were actually reported, and the numbers for unreported incidents are much higher.

Hudood Ordinance

The Hudood Ordinance in Pakistan is a medieval law used to oppress and intimidate women, and has been used to imprison thousands of women who report rapes. Under the ordinance, in order to prove rape charges, a female rape victim is required to present the testimony of four male witnesses. If she is unable to do so, she may then be punished for committing adultery.^{clxxxiii} This law effectively silences rape victims since they face the possibility of being charged with adultery, as it is highly unrealistic to expect a woman to produce four male eye-witnesses to the crime.

The Women's Rights Bill, introduced in November 2006, slightly amended the Hudood Ordinance by reducing the required male eye-witnesses for a rape conviction from four to two. Although this was a positive step forward, the new Women's Rights Bill still

presents substantial obstacles for rape victims to achieve justice. Furthermore, other provisions of the Hudood Ordinance still remain intact.^{clxxxiv} Despite repeated calls by women's rights and human rights group to repeal the ordinance, the Pakistani government has yet to take action.

In addition to the Hudood Ordinances, the Qisas (retribution) and Diyat (compensation) Ordinances allow an honor killing to be forgiven by the victim's relatives in exchange for monetary compensation. Moreover, the compensation for an honor crime against a woman is half that for a male victim.^{clxxxv}

Rape/Kidnappings/Forceful Conversions

A worrisome trend in Pakistan, particularly in Sindh province, is the abduction and forced conversion to Islam of Hindu girls. According to a report prepared by the Asian Centre for Human Rights (ACHR): "It is a crime for the Hindus to have land and beautiful daughters. Kidnapping, rape and forcible marriage of Hindu girls is a common practice. In case of arrest, the accused can get away by producing a certificate issued by any Muslim seminary that the kidnapped girls have voluntarily adopted Islam and the accused have married the girls. The courts generally do not consider the fact that most of the girls are minor and simply accept the certificate of conversion without any investigation. It has been reported that more than 15 families are forcibly converted from Hinduism to Islam in Sindh province every year. Often, young Hindu girls were kidnapped and forcibly married."^{clxxxvi} Several Islamic seminaries in Sindh incite their Muslim students to convert Hindu girls, telling them that it is the equivalent of "Haj-e-Akbari," or the greatest religious duty for Muslims.^{clxxxvii} Wasim Shahzad, the Minister of State for Interior, believes that kidnappings and forced conversions, "are taking place to force the Hindus to leave Pakistan where they have been living for the past 5,000 years."^{clxxxviii}

A recent case that vividly illustrates the problems faced by Hindu girls was the abduction and forced conversion of a 17 year-old Hindu girl, Deepa, in Tharparkar district of Sindh province. Deepa, who received private tutoring from a Muslim teacher, Ashraf Kashkheli, was kidnapped by Kashkheli on the night of December 31, 2006. After kidnapping Deepa, Kashkheli reportedly took her to an Islamic school, forcibly converted her to Islam, and then married her. The owner of the *madrassa*, Ayube Jan Sarhandi, gave Kashkheli safe passage out of the area and provided a certificate stating that Deepa had voluntarily accepted Islam. Deepa's parents and the Hindu community, however, allege that she was forced to convert and marry Kashkheli.^{clxxxix} Moreover, the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan (HRCP) confirms that such occurrences are typical

in Sindh.^{CXC} Additionally, Deepa was still a minor, so the marriage was illegal under Pakistani law.

When Deepa's parents tried to file a criminal complaint, the local police declined to register the case. Moreover, the Chief Minister of Sindh's political advisors pressured the family not to register a complaint with the police, since the owner of the *madrasa*, Sarhandi was politically connected. Deepa's whereabouts are still unknown.^{CXCI}

In addition to kidnappings and forced conversions, Hindu women are also vulnerable to rape and sexual assault. A disturbing example was the gang rape of three Hindu women in the village of Ghulam Ali Khwar in Larkana district of Sindh in late February 2007. During the incident, eight armed men attacked a Hindu residence, held the family at gunpoint, and raped the three women, before leaving with stolen property.^{CXCII} Former Prime Minister, the late Benazir Bhutto condemned the episode and criticized the government for its inaction in bringing the culprits to justice.^{CXCIII} This horrific event followed similar incidents earlier in the month in Ghotki, where two women, Nasima Labano, and Nasima Girgej, were also raped.^{CXCIV}

Although violence is disproportionately used against Hindu women as a weapon of subjugation and religious persecution, the crimes transcend religion. Muslim women are also frequently targeted by Islamic extremists, including the recent murder of Punjab Minister for Social Welfare Zille Huma Usman on February 20, 2007. The minister was killed by Maulvi Sarwar Mughal, who has murdered several other Muslim women for their "sins against Islam".^{CXCV} Violence against women is especially common in the tribal areas and NWFP, where strict Islamic law is enforced. For instance, in September, three women were beheaded for allegedly engaging in "immoral activities" in contravention of Sharia Islamic law.^{CXCVI}

Temple Attacks/Encroachment

The demolition and encroachment of Hindu temples in Pakistan is an ongoing problem, and is often accomplished with the tacit support of government authorities and police. In October 2006, a Hindu residential compound and historic temple to Lord Shiva in Lyari town, Karachi, were forcibly seized by a group of Muslims. The Muslims evicted several of the Hindu families living in the compound, used the premises to slaughter cows, and converted the temple into a Muslim place of worship. Instead of protecting the Hindu residents of the compound, local police actively participated in the evictions and desecration of the temple. Moreover, government authorities also failed to assist the evicted Hindu families.^{CXCVII}

In July of 2007, the newly built Jagannath Temple in Sialkot, Punjab province was vandalized and locked by a group of unidentified men, thereby preventing devotees and administrators from entering the temple premises. Temple administrators were deeply disturbed and concerned by the incident, and demanded a criminal probe.^{cxcviii}

Hindu pilgrims visiting temples throughout the country have also come under attack from Muslim extremists. For example, two Hindu pilgrims were killed and seven wounded after gunmen attacked a caravan of Hindu pilgrims in Sindh in May 2006.^{cxcix}

Besides Hindu temples, Pakistan also has several ancient Buddhist stupas and statues. One of these Buddhist sites recently came under attack in the Swat Valley when Islamic militants, led by Mullah Fazlullah destroyed the head, shoulders, and feet of a 40 meter tall statue of Buddha. This attack was reminiscent of the destruction of the Bamiyan Buddha statues in Afghanistan carried out by the Taliban in 2001.^{cc}

Government Sanctioned Depictions of Hinduism

Pakistan's Education Minister, Asharaf Qazi, declared that the concept of Jihad will remain in Pakistani textbooks as a part of its curriculum and that the Islamiyat secondary school curriculum will cover Quranic teachings, Haqooq Allah, Rights of God, life of Prophet Muhammad, etiquette and prominent personalities of Islam — all from a militant Islamist perspective.^{cci} Ironically, this intolerance is indirectly financed by the U.S., which supplied \$62.7 million in 2006 for education in Pakistan.^{ccii}

Extracts (translated from Urdu to English) from the government-sponsored textbooks approved by the National Curriculum Wing of the Federal Ministry of Education demonstrate the derogatory and inflammatory portrayal of Hinduism to the children of Pakistan:^{cciii}

- Grade IV: "The religion of Hindus did not teach them good things, [and the] Hindus did not respect women."
- Grade V: "The Hindu has always been an enemy of Islam."
- Grade VI: "The Hindu setup was based on injustice and cruelty."
- Grade VII: "Hindus always desired to crush the Muslims as a nation [and] several attempts were made by the Hindus to erase Muslim culture and civilization."
- Grade VIII: "Before Islam people lived in untold misery all over the world."
- Grade X: "Islam gives a message of peace and brotherhood...There is no such concept in Hinduism."

In addition to these negative depictions of Hinduism, many government run schools in Sindh force Hindu students to take Islamic studies classes. Hindu students and other minorities are denied the opportunity to take classes in their own religions, and often struggle in the Islamiyat courses. These schools include N.A. Bechar Government Primary School, also known as Syed Mahmood Shah Gazi, and Sindh Madrasatul Islam School, in Karachi. Although the education board has technically implemented an alternative ethics course, in reality the schools and teachers still force non-Muslim students to take the Islamiyat classes.^{cciv}

Social Persecution

The frequent abductions of Hindus, has left the Hindu community in Pakistan in a continuous state of fear and insecurity, with little protection from law enforcement. According to Mukesh Kumar, Pakistan People's Party Member of Provincial Assembly, at least one Hindu is kidnapped every month. During a three month period from the beginning of 2007 until March 15, there were three Hindu kidnappings in the city of Kashmore alone. The failure of government authorities to protect Hindus has forced many to pay local gangs "protection money" to avoid being kidnapped for ransom. Often times, however, a family is unable to pay "protection money" and cannot afford the demanded ransom, resulting in the abducted victim being murdered.^{ccv}

A recent incident that demonstrates the problem was the kidnapping and gruesome murder of 22-year old Garish Kumar. Garish, a Hindu electrical engineer was originally kidnapped from his home in Hyderabad, Sindh province on August 17, 2006. Kumar's mutilated body was recovered from a *madrasa* in Kotri, Sindh on February 6, 2007.^{ccvi} Members of an Islamic militant group, Hizb-ul-Mujahadeen, confessed to the crime and also admitted that they targeted Kumar because he was Hindu. Despite their confession, however, no action has been taken against Hizb-ul-Mujahadeen, and it continues to operate freely in Pakistan. Hizb-ul-Mujahadeen is also one of the terrorist organizations operating in the Jammu and Kashmir state of India with the support of the Pakistani government.^{ccvii}

Two other Hindus, Cheetan Kumar (45 years-old) and Gordhan Das, known as G.M. Bhagat (55 years-old), were abducted in late 2006 in Umer Kot district of Sindh province. The circumstances surrounding the abduction of these two men were almost identical to that of the abduction of Garish Kumar, as both involved a white double cabin jeep (with the same registration number), followed by a red Toyota car. According to local residents, these same vehicles have been linked to several other kidnappings and disappearances in the area.^{ccviii}

Additionally, during March of 2007, two young Hindu men, 28 year-old Pawan (from Kashmore) and Om Prakash (from Jacobabad) were kidnapped.^{ccix} A number of political activists criticized police apathy and failure to recover the kidnapped Hindu men.^{ccx} Following these incidents and the kidnapping of Hindu businessman, Ashok Kumar Kohistani, the Pakistan Hindu Council (PHC) appealed directly to President Musharraf to ask local authorities to protect the Hindu community and recover kidnapped Hindus in Sindh.^{ccxi}

Religious minorities, especially Hindus, are also more vulnerable to land-grabbing and forced evictions. These evictions and illegal land seizures are often done at the behest of government authorities and with the cooperation of local police. On May 4th, 50 Hindu families living in Naukot Village in Thar District of Sindh were forcibly evicted from their land by local police. The illegal eviction was reportedly done on the orders of the Chief Minister of Sindh province, in order to accommodate a public rally for General Musharraf in the area.^{ccxii}

Hindus also face economic discrimination and are poorly represented in government jobs. With the exception of former Supreme Court Justice Rana Bhagwandas, Hindus rarely hold top civilian or military positions.^{ccxiii} According to a census of federal civil servants taken in 2006, only 0.21% of civil service positions were held by Hindus. This is well below their overall population, which is approximately 1.6%.^{ccxiv}

Discriminatory Laws

Islam has become institutionalized in Pakistan and permeates the legal framework of the country. For instance, Article 2 of the Constitution proclaims that Islam is “the State religion of Pakistan,” and recognizes that the Koran and Sunnah are the highest sources of law, not to be contradicted by secular laws.^{ccxv} Furthermore, Article 41(2) expressly provides that an individual must be Muslim in order to hold the office of President of Pakistan.^{ccxvi}

The Constitution also provides that high office holders must take the oath of office by invoking an Islamic prayer, whether or not they are Muslim. This occurred on March 24, 2007 when a Hindu judge, Rana Bhagwandas, was sworn in as acting Supreme Court Chief Justice, following the suspension of sitting Chief Justice Iftikhar Muhammad Chaudhry.^{ccxvii} The Hindu judge was required to take the Islamic oath “In the name of Allah, the most Beneficent, the most Merciful,” and ended with “May Allah Almighty help and guide me, (A’meen).”^{ccxviii} The Constitution and other statutory laws favor

Muslims, and directly and indirectly discriminate against religious minorities, thereby making them second-class citizens.

Blasphemy Laws

The blasphemy laws, which are part of Pakistan's Penal Code, impose severe punishments for insults to the Prophet Mohammed or desecration of the Koran. Section 295-C of the Penal Code, provides the harshest penalty by mandating the death penalty for the use of derogatory remarks about the Prophet Mohammed.^{ccxix} These archaic laws have harmed all sections of Pakistani society, but have had the greatest impact on religious minorities, particularly Hindus, Christians, and Ahmadiyas. There are currently dozens of blasphemy cases pending in the court system, while the accused languish in jail under oppressive conditions.^{ccxx}

The blasphemy laws have often been misused and employed as a means to target and harass non-Muslims. For instance, from January 1 to June 1 2007, out of 25 alleged blasphemy cases, 16 involved Christians. On January 26, 2007 criminal cases were registered against five Ahmadi children, some as young as eight years old.^{ccxxi} In 2006, 44% of the registered blasphemy cases involved non-Muslims, and in 2005, 33% of the accused were non-Muslims, of which six percent were Hindu. Considering that Hindus, Christians, and Ahmadiyas collectively account for only four percent of the population, they have been disproportionately targeted.^{ccxxii} Furthermore, these laws inherently discriminate against minorities, and severely restrict freedom of thought and religion.

In addition to the existing blasphemy laws, an Apostasy Bill was introduced by a coalition of Islamist parties, known as the Mutathida Majlis-e-Amal (MMA), in the National Assembly in May 2007. The Bill requires the death penalty for a Muslim man converting to another religion, and a life sentence for a Muslim woman convicted of the same offense.^{ccxxiii}

Religious Identification Laws

On March 24, 2005, Pakistan restored the discriminatory practice of mandating the mention of religious identity of individuals in all new passports. The Pakistan federal cabinet, with Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz in chair, directed the Ministry of Interior to reintroduce the rule after its repeal under the Zafaraullah Khan Jamali government in 2004. The move was seen as a concession to the Muttahida Majlis-e-Amal (MMA), a coalition of hard-line religious parties that support General Musharraf.^{ccxxiv} Religious Identification laws tend to promote discrimination against non-Muslims as they

separately identify minorities from the majority Muslim population. This further establishes their inferior status, and also leaves them vulnerable to religious persecution and harassment at the hands of government officials.

Bonded Labor

The bonded labor system in Pakistan systematically enslaves an estimated 1.7 million people, many of whom are young children. Poor Hindus constitute the majority of bonded laborers, particularly in rural parts of Sindh, where they work for Muslim landowners. Although the system is found primarily in Sindh, it is also practiced in parts of Punjab province.^{CCXXV} The U.S. Department of Labor maintains that the debt bondage system in Pakistan operates by “giving advances of *peshgi*” (bonded money) to a person. As long as all or part of the *peshgi* debt remains outstanding, the debtor/worker is bound to the creditor/employer. In case of sickness or death, the family of the individual is responsible for the debt, which often passes down from generation to generation. In the case of children, the *peshgi* is paid to a parent or guardian, who then provides the child to work off the debt.”^{CCXXVI} The system is characterized by patterns of abuse, detention, and exploitation.^{CCXXVII}

In 1992, Pakistan passed the Bonded Labor (Abolition) Act, outlawing all forms of bonded labor and forgiving any outstanding debt owed by laborers to their employers.^{CCXXVIII} Despite this legislation, local government officials have been uncooperative in ending the practice and securing the release of bonded laborers. The police often refuse to register complaints against abusive landowners. Although human rights groups, particularly the HRCP, have helped release thousands of debt laborers, the laborers are frequently recaptured by their landlords.^{CCXXIX} Notwithstanding these efforts by human rights organizations, and the passage of the Bonded Labor (Abolition) Act, the practice of debt labor continues to thrive and plague poor Hindus and other marginalized segments of Pakistani society.

Hindus Targeted in Balochistan

Minorities, particularly Hindus and Ahmadiyas, continue to face a wave of human rights abuses in Balochistan, the south-western province where Pakistan conducted its nuclear tests in 1999. Recently, Balochistan has been the center of an ethnic insurgency demanding more rights and resources from the central government.^{CCXXX} In 2005, the unrest forced more than 5,000 Hindus (exact figure is unknown) to flee the fighting and enter Sindh.^{CCXXXI} In one attack by the Pakistani military on the town of Dera Bugti, 33 Hindu civilians were killed, most of whom were women and children.^{CCXXXII} During another incident on January 20, 2006, an army helicopter gunship fired rockets

on a Hindu village in the Dera Bugti locality in Balochistan. According to Nabi Baksh, a spokesperson of the Jamhoori Watan Party (JWP), two women and four children were injured. The intent was to intimidate the dwindling Hindu population into leaving southwest Pakistan. Hindu resistance fighters responded by attempting a siege upon Government buildings and posts. The Pakistani Army then attacked Dera Bugti's urban area with heavy weapons, killing nine people, including two women and five children.

ccxxxiii

Militant Muslim groups in Balochistan have also targeted Hindus by desecrating temples, setting homes on fire, and destroying Hindu shops and property. Here too, Hindu females, particularly school students, are forcibly converted to Islam.^{ccxxxiv}

Pakistan-Based Terrorist Groups

Pakistan has become a center and operational base for Islamic terrorism. The United Kingdom has banned five Pakistan based militant organizations: Harakat-ul-Jihad-ul-Islami, Jundallah, Khuddam ul-Islam, Lashkar-e Jhangvi (LeJ) and Sipah-e Sahab Pakistan (SSP). These groups are engaged in terrorist activities in the Indian state of Jammu and Kashmir as well as the rest of India.^{ccxxxv} The United States has also designated LeJ as a terrorist organization along with other Pakistan based organizations such as Harakat ul-Mujahidin (HuM), Jaish-e-Mohammed (JeM) and Lashkar-e-Tayyiba (LT).^{ccxxxvi} In addition, Al-Qaeda also operates in the tribal regions of the country.

The following is a list of some of the extremist groups functioning in Pakistan

Militant Organization	Aim/Goal
Harakat-ul-Jihad-ul-Islami	Accession of the Indian state of Jammu and Kashmir to Pakistan; Spread terror throughout India
Jundallah	Rejects democracy of even the most Islamic-oriented style; Establish Sharia law; Accession of the Indian state of Jammu and Kashmir to Pakistan
Khuddam ul-Islam	Accession of Indian state of Jammu and Kashmir to Pakistan; Radical Islamist state in Pakistan; "Destroy" India and the US
Lashkar-e Jhangvi (LeJ)	Violently transform Pakistan into a Sunni state under the complete control of Sharia law; Declare all Shia as <i>kafirs</i> (infidels); Destruction of other religions, notably Hinduism, Judaism, and Christianity

Sipah-e Sahab Pakistan (SSP)	Violently transform Pakistan into a Sunni state under the complete control of Sharia law; Declare all Shia as <i>kafirs</i> (infidels); Destruction of other religions, notably Hinduism, Judaism, and Christianity
Harkat ul-Mujahidin (HuM)	Targets Indian troops, civilians in the Indian state of Jammu and Kashmir, and Western interests
Jaish-e-Mohammed (JeM) (Army of Mohammed)	Accession of the Indian state of Jammu and Kashmir with Pakistan; Targets Indian government and political leaders
Lashkar-e-Tayyiba (LT) (Army of the Righteous)	Targets Indian troops and civilians in the Indian state of Jammu and Kashmir

The Pakistani government has been unable and/or unwilling to crack down on the aforementioned organizations. This is primarily due to the fact that they serve as strategic weapons against India. Although Islamic extremists now pose a serious threat to the stability of Pakistan itself, members in the government, military and intelligence services, continue to nurture and protect militant groups.^{ccxxxvii}

Violations of Constitution and UN Covenants

Constitution of Pakistan

Pakistan's Constitution (Articles 20, 21, and 22) guarantees religious freedom and safeguards to its citizens.^{ccxxxviii} For example, Article 20 states that, "Every citizen shall have the right to profess, practice and propagate his religion; and every religious denomination and every sect thereof shall have the right to establish, maintain and manage its religious institutions."^{ccxxxix} However, Article 19 of the Constitution asserts that, "Every citizen shall have the right to freedom of speech and expression, and there shall be freedom of the press, subject to any reasonable restrictions imposed by law in the interest of the glory of Islam or the integrity, security or defense of Pakistan," thus making religious freedom subordinate to the supremacy of Islam.^{ccxl} Despite the assurances provided in Articles 20-22, Article 19 establishes justification for the persecution of Hindus, Christians, and Ahmadiyyas including destruction and desecration of their places of worship, and punishment under the blasphemy laws.

Article 25 of the Constitution maintains that "All citizens are equal before law and are entitled to equal protection of law...There shall be no discrimination on the basis of sex alone."^{ccxli} Despite the constitutional guarantee of equal protection, women regularly

face rape, honor killings, and domestic abuse, without adequate protection from Pakistani laws. Moreover, they continue to face a myriad of inequalities in the judicial system, and will continue to do so, as long as the Hudood Ordinance remains in effect.

Article 35 mandates, “The State shall protect the marriage, the family, the mother and the child.”^{ccxlii} Article 36 states, “The State shall safeguard the legitimate rights and interests of minorities, including their due representation in the Federal and Provincial services.”^{ccxliii} In reality, however, neither families nor minorities are being protected by Pakistan as kidnappings and forced conversions of Hindu girls continue to occur.

International Law

Curiously, Pakistan has taken no action toward signing or ratifying the UN’s International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (CCPR), although it is still accountable for its provisions under customary international law. Several of the Articles encompassed in the CCPR have been repeatedly violated by Pakistan. For instance, Article 18 protects the basic “right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion.”^{ccxliv} The Blasphemy Laws and their application to minorities, clearly violate this article. Moreover, under Articles 26 and 27, religious minorities are guaranteed equality before the law, and freedom of religion without discrimination.^{ccxlv} Contrary to Article 26 and 27, however, the Constitutional preference for Islam, religious identification laws, and depiction of Hinduism in school textbooks, all promote discrimination against Hindus. Additionally, the forced marriage of kidnapped Hindu girls to Muslim boys clearly contravenes Article 23(2), which states: “No marriage shall be entered into without the free and full consent of the intending spouses.”^{ccxlv}

Other international covenants and human rights treaties are also relevant to the situation in Pakistan. For instance, the Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Intolerance and of Discrimination Based on Religion or Belief, applies to Pakistan's treatment of its religious minorities, particularly Hindus. The Declaration mandates that every person has the right to practice the religion of his/her choice, and should not be subject to discrimination based on his belief system.^{ccxlvii} The institutionalization of Islam by the government, however, has led to the social, economic, and political discrimination of Hindus and other religious groups. Moreover, contrary to the Declaration, Hindus have been subjected to violence, conversions, and other acts of intolerance at the hands of Muslim extremists.

The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women requires the equal treatment of men and women before the law, and an end to

discrimination against women in all aspects of life.^{ccxlviii} In addition, according to Article 4 of the Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women, “States should condemn violence against women and should not invoke any custom, tradition or religious consideration to avoid their obligations with respect to its elimination. States should pursue by all appropriate means and without delay a policy of eliminating violence against women....”^{ccxlix} The continued use of the Hudood Ordinance, kidnapping and conversion of Hindu girls, and systematic oppression and violence against women are flagrant violations of these two conventions.

The Slavery Convention of 1926 strove to bring about “the complete abolition of slavery in all its forms”.^{cc} Similarly, under the Abolition of Forced Labor Convention, countries are required to take all necessary steps to suppress and completely abolish the practice of debt bondage or any other type of “forced or compulsory labor”.^{ccli} Both of these conventions apply to the widespread use of bonded labor in Pakistan. The Pakistani government has violated the tenets of the Forced Labor Convention by failing to take adequate measures to end the bonded labor system. Although the practice was officially outlawed in 1992 through the Bonded Labor (Abolition) Act, government officials have refused to enforce it and are often complicit in allowing the practice to continue. Moreover, since debt bondage is the modern equivalent of slavery, Pakistan’s actions have also violated the Slavery Convention.

Regardless of whether Pakistan has signed or ratified all of the above human rights treaties, it is still bound by their provisions under customary international law. Customary international law holds nations accountable for the protection of basic universal human rights.

Conclusion and Recommendations

HAF concurs with several other human rights organization in expressing serious concern over the Pakistani government's continued complicity in human rights violations against minorities. According to internationally recognized criteria, Pakistan is not a free country today. Freedom House rates the political rights enjoyed by Pakistan’s citizens at 6 (one above the lowest grade of 7), and civil liberties enjoyed at 5 (two above the lowest grade of 7).^{cclii} Pressure must be brought upon Pakistan to rescind discriminatory laws such as the Blasphemy Act, and the mandated identification of religious affiliation in passports. As the U.S. considers Pakistan an ally in the war against terrorism, it is critical that the U.S. urges the Pakistani government to institute social and political reforms. Moreover, Pakistan should set up a Human Rights

Commission and a National Minorities Commission, and end its support for terrorism in the Indian state of Jammu and Kashmir.

HAF further recommends that the US engage in increased dialogue with Pakistan on the issues of human rights and religious freedom. Additionally, a fact-finding mission should be organized by the United States Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF) to investigate the desperate status of Hindus and other minorities. International human rights organizations must also take a more active role in highlighting the plight and suffering of the Hindu community in Pakistan.

Finally, HAF calls directly on the government of Pakistan to take immediate steps for the protection of Hindus from rape, kidnapping, and forced conversions. School textbooks must be modified so that they do not promote lies about Hinduism, and hatred against Hindus and other minorities, and instead promote tolerance and pluralism.

Russian Federation



Figure 7: Map of the Russian Federation

© CIA World Factbook

Area: 6,592,812 miles

Population: 141,377,752 (2007 est.)

Religions: Russian Orthodox 15%-20%, other Christian 2%, Islam 10-15% (2006 est; includes practicing worshippers only)

Languages: Russian, others

Location: Northern Asia (that part west of the Urals is included with Europe); bordering, the Arctic Ocean, between Europe and the North Pacific Ocean. ^{ccliii}

Introduction

The origin of the Russian state coincides with the arrival of Scandinavian traders and warriors, the Varangians. ^{ccliv} Christianity was made the state religion by Vladimir I (980 – 1015), who adopted (988 -- 989) the Greek Orthodox rite. Founded in the 12th century, the Principality of Muscovy was able to emerge from over 200 years of Mongol domination (13th -- 15th centuries) and to gradually conquer and absorb surrounding principalities. ^{cclv} During the rule of Peter I, Russian hegemony spread to the Baltic Sea, and country was named Russian empire. ^{cclvi} First forms of reform to the Orthodox

Eastern Church took place under his leadership. He abolished the patriarchate of Moscow and created in 1721 the Holy Synod, directly subordinate to the emperor thus depriving the church of the last vestiges of independence.^{cclvii} Finally, after the Revolution of 1905, a modern form of government emerged in the Russian empire. The parliament (Duma) and a constitution were granted by Nicholas II. The monarchy finally fell in 1917.^{cclviii} After the Communists seized power and the Union of the Soviet Socialist Republic (USSR) was formed, people were not allowed to worship freely as the Communist movement believed in a strictly “atheistic” state. When the Soviet Union collapsed (1991) and Boris Yeltsin became president, the government established the right to freedom of religious under the newly envisioned Constitution (1993), followed with the creation of guidelines that religious institutions must follow.

Status of Human Rights of Hindus in Russia, 2007

There are five major groups of Hindus in Russia: International Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON), Brahma Samiti, Tantra Sangha, Vedanta Society, and OSHA Maharishi Rajneesh.^{cclix} Legal obstacles to the registration under the complex 1997 Law “On Freedom of Conscience and Associations” continued to disadvantage some religious groups considered to be non-traditional.^{cclx}

The treatment received by the small group of Hindus in Russia has been discriminatory and Hindus have been harassed. For example, the Hare Krishna’s (ISKCON) have been struggling to build a temple in Moscow. The first Hindu temple was opened in 1990 by the Moscow Krishna Group in a dilapidated building rented from the city and repaired by the devotees.^{cclxi} Since 1991, the Russian Hindu community has approached city officials in Moscow to build a temple due to the lack of space and poor conditions.^{cclxii} The government refused bowing down to pressure from the Russian Orthodox Church; however, it promised the Hare Krishnas five acres of land in a Moscow suburb to build a temple.^{cclxiii} The Hare Krishnas now reside in a temporary iron corrugated shed with no heating, water, electricity, and sewerage, after the building they rented that was on “city government” was destroyed. The 15,000 strong Hare Krishnas have no house of worship.^{cclxiv} The Russian governmental officials have not kept their word to this day. The legislation that has been passed through which the administrative processes have to be carried out is flawed, and allows the on-going violations to continue as the central government is doing nothing to stop what is happening at the level of local governments. The lack of federal governmental oversight encourages the violations to continue. The Office of Federal Human Rights Ombudsman Vladimir Lukin receives 200-250 religious freedom complaints every year, out of which 75% represent genuine violations of religious freedom of rights guaranteed under the law.^{cclxv} Contradictions

between federal and local laws, and the varying interpretations of the law, were used by some regional offices to restrict the activities of religious minorities.^{cclxvi} According to the U.S. State Department's *International Religious Freedom Report of 2007*, in Russia the restrictions on religious freedom happen in the following manner:

Restrictions on religious freedom generally fall into four categories: registration of religious organizations, access to the places of worship (including access to land and building permits), visas for foreign religions personnel, and government harassment of religious organizations and individuals.^{cclxvii}

Aside from these types of human rights violations, government legislation like the 1997 law "On Freedom of Conscience and Associations" – the law stipulates that the Russian Orthodox Church as the pre-eminent religion in the region – is discriminatory in nature. The law recognizes Judaism, Islam, and Buddhism but all other faiths not mentioned in the document face strict curbs that restrict their legal rights, missionary work, and educational activities; any religion not established over 15 years in Russia cannot publish books or invite spiritual leaders.^{cclxviii} The components of the law give the local governments more authority and allow them more jurisdiction, thus enabling them to discriminate groups through the abuse of this law.

In order to be an established religious organization within the Russian Federation, an organization must register with the Federal Registration Service. This process can be lengthy and arduous for new religious groups in the country and can be seen to prevent some groups from achieving the so-called "registered" status. Often, difficulties that religious communities face are rooted in bureaucratic obstacles and corruption, and not necessarily religious bigotry.^{cclxix}

Another law that often impedes religious freedom is the 2002 Law on Extremism which allows for criminalizing a broad spectrum of activities.^{cclxx} Some government officials and law enforcement agencies have spoken of protecting the "spiritual superiority" of the country by discouraging the growth of "sects" and "cults" alluding to new religious movements.^{cclxxi} However, the most powerful law is the 1997 law which gives officials the authority to ban religious groups and thereby prohibit all of the activities of a religious community.

Today, the Hare Krishnas are fighting to build a temple on land promised by city officials in Moscow. They have experienced tremendous difficulties in the past, and at one moment during the communist era the Hare Krishnas were sent to labor camps. Mikhail Gorbachev set them free under strong international pressure.

Violations of the Constitution and UN Covenants

Constitution of Russia

The Constitution of the Russian Federation enshrines human rights of all citizens living in the country irrespective of race, religion, and sex. Article 14 (clause 1) states, “The Russian Federation shall be a secular state. No religion may be instituted as state sponsored or mandatory religion.”^{cclxxii} Article 14 (clause 2) further proclaims that, “Religious associations shall be separated from the state, and shall be equal before the law.”^{cclxxiii} Furthermore, Article 13 (clause 5) explicitly states, “The establishment and the activities of public associations, whose aims and actions are directed at forcible alteration of the fundamentals of constitutional governance and violation of the integrity of the Russian Federation and undermining of the security of the state, the forming of armed units, the incitement of social, racial, national and religious strife shall be prohibited.”^{cclxxiv}

The way the Russian Federation favors the Russian Orthodox Church (ROC) is further illustrated by the preferential treatment towards the faith resulting in the alienation of other faiths. This support to the ROC is therefore unconstitutional. In addition, Article 19 (clause 2) states, “The state shall guarantee the equality of rights and liberties regardless of sex, race, nationality, language, origin, property or employment status, residence, attitude to religion, convictions, membership of public associations or any other circumstance. Any restrictions of the rights of citizens on social, racial, national, linguistic or religious grounds shall be forbidden.”^{cclxxv} The Russian Federation undermines the constitution when it restricts the rights of religious minorities in the region such as the denial of land to the Hare Krishnas which was promised to them by the local Duma in Moscow to build a temple. Article 28 mentions, “Everyone shall be guaranteed the right to the freedom of conscience, to the freedom of religious worship, including the right to profess, individually or jointly with others, any religion, or to profess no religion, to freely choose, possess, and disseminate religious or other beliefs, and to act in conformity with them.”^{cclxxvi} This right is undermined by the 1997 Law of Conscience which states that a religious institution needs to be at least 15 years old before it can start to publish material for dissemination.

Finally, Article 29 (clause 2) states, “Propaganda or campaigning inciting social, racial, national or religious hatred and strife is impermissible. The propaganda of social, racial, national, religious, or language superiority is forbidden.”^{cclxxvii} The Russian Federation did not stop the ROC’s aggressive campaign against the Hare Krishna temple construction. Neither Archbishop Nikon’s campaign against the Hare Krishnas nor the

church's adherents protesting on the streets was criticized nor stopped by government officials and law enforcement agencies.^{cclxxviii} This inaction directly contravenes Article 29.

We can conclude therefore that Russia has been overall negligent in stopping the on-going violations of human rights of religious minorities.

International Law

In addition to the rights established in the Constitution of the Russian Federation, there are other rights that are guaranteed to the citizens of Russia. The country has ratified the International Covenant on Civil & Political Rights (ICCPR) on October 16, 1973.^{cclxxix} Article 2 of ICCPR states, "Each State Party to the present Covenant undertakes to respect and to ensure to all individuals within its territory and subject to its jurisdiction the rights recognized in the present Covenant, without distinction of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status."^{cclxxx} Furthermore, Article 20 says, "Any advocacy of national, racial, or religious hatred that constitutes incitement to discrimination, hostility or violence shall be prohibited by law."^{cclxxxi} Both articles in this covenant can draw similarities to Article 13 of the Russian Federation Constitution. Article 18 of the Covenant states that, "Everyone shall have the right to the freedom to have or to adopt a religion with others in public or private to manifest his religion or belief in worship, observance, practice and teaching."^{cclxxxii} This is parallel to Article 19 and 28 of the Constitution of the Russian Federation. The discriminatory treatment meted out to religious minorities in the Russian Federation, including the Hare Krishnas, shows that the Russian government has failed to fulfill the promises guaranteed under the ICCPR covenant which it has signed.

The Russian Federation also ratified on February 4, 1969 the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination.^{cclxxxiii} Article 1 of this convention describes "racial discrimination", to mean "any distinction, exclusion, restriction, or preference based on race, colour, descent, or national or ethnic origin which has the purpose or effect of nullifying or impairing the recognition, enjoyment, or exercise, on an equal footing, of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural or any other field of public life."^{cclxxxiv} Article 13 and Article 19 of the Russian Federation Constitution are similar to this. Meanwhile, Article 2 of the treaty mentions that, "State Parties condemn racial discrimination and undertake to pursue by all appropriate means and without delay a policy eliminating racial discrimination in all its forms and promoting understanding among all races."^{cclxxxv} In particular, Clause C

elaborates further by saying, “Each State Party shall take effective measures to review governmental, national, and local policies, and to amend, rescind or nullify any laws and to amend, rescind or nullify any laws and regulations which have the effect of creating or perpetuating racial discrimination wherever it exists;”^{cclxxxvi} furthermore, Clause D states that, “Each State Party shall prohibit and bring to an end, by all appropriate means, including legislation as required by circumstances, racial discrimination by any persons, group or organization.”^{cclxxxvii} Article 5 expands on Article 2 to further include, “... the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion.”^{cclxxxviii} Thus, Russia’s 1997 Law on Freedom of Conscience and Association violates all of these articles as established in the Convention.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Despite constitutional guarantees, the treatment of religious organizations, particularly minority groups, varied across Russia depending on the decisions of local officials. In some areas local authorities prevented minority denominations like the Hare Krishnas from re-registering as local religious organizations and subjected them to legal harassment. It is incumbent upon Russia’s central authorities to curb the vagaries of regional dispensation, and the inclination of authorities to favor the Russian Orthodox Church.

According to the State Department, “Some local and municipal governments prevented minority religious groups from obtaining venues for large gatherings and from acquiring property for religious uses.”^{cclxxxix} This and other such actions should be strictly forbidden and the guilty punished. Russia has had a long relationship with Hinduism and Indian religions, and a recent find of an ancient Vishnu *murti* in the Volga region raises the interesting prospect of an older and deeper religious connection between the two countries.^{ccxc} HAF urges Russian authorities to stem the tide of religious fundamentalism and discrimination and enable Russians to enjoy the guaranteed freedom of religion.

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia



Figure 8: Map of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

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Area: 2,149,690 sq. km

Population: 27,601,038 (July 2007 est.)

Religion: Exact numbers are not available. Saudi government claims all citizens are Muslim, of these 85 percent are Sunni and 15 percent are Shiite. Non-Muslim migrant workers within the state unofficially practice mainly Hinduism or Christianity.^{ccxc}

Ethnicity: 90 percent are ethnically Arab, 10 percent are Afro-Asian. This does not include the 7 million migrant workers who are predominantly South Asian in descent.

Languages: Arabic

Location: Middle East, bordering the Persian Gulf and the Red Sea, north of Yemen^{ccxcii}

History

In the late eighteenth century, Saudi tribal ruler Muhammad bin Saud, and Wahhabi cleric Muhammad Abd Al-Wahhab, merged to form a new political union on the Arabian Peninsula.^{ccxciii} Over the course of the next century, the Saud family struggled to

maintain power against Egypt, the Ottoman Empire and other tribal bodies. In 1902, King Abdul Aziz Al-Saud engaged in a successful military campaign to retake Riyadh and other prominent cities. His nascent state was founded and recognized by the United Kingdom in 1927 with the Treaty of Jeddah. The three regions of Al-Hasa, the Nejd and Hejaz officially became the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in 1932.^{ccxciv}

Vast reserves of oil were discovered in March 1938. This triggered development programs in the late 1940s bankrolled by Western states, particularly the United States. Today, Saudi Arabia is the leading petroleum producer and exporter. Oil constitutes 75% of government revenues and 90% of all exports.^{ccxcv}

Crown Prince Abdullah has led the country since the King Fahd, suffered a stroke in 1995. The monarch appoints the two legislative bodies, including the Council of Ministers and the *Majlis-al-Shura* (Consultative Council). The king also appoints emirs to administer the state's regions. Political parties are forbidden and traditionally neither men nor women possess the right to vote.^{ccxcvi} In October 2003, the government allowed elections for half of the members of the 2004 municipal councils, but elections were not held until 2005.^{ccxcvii} Only male citizens over the age of 21, with the exclusion of military personnel, were allowed to participate.

Saudi Arabia is an absolute monarchy, as established by the 1992 Basic Law of Government, which uses its interpretation of Islam to maintain control. The Qu'ran and Shari'a (Islamic law) serve as the state's constitution.^{ccxcviii} Its law code is founded upon the conservative form of Sunni Islam, known as Wahhabism. This permits judges to use capital or corporal punishment for crimes, including murder, theft, sexual abuse, homosexuality and adultery. Crimes such as drunkenness or those "against public morality" can also be punished.^{ccxcix}

The demographic composition of Saudi Arabia has transformed dramatically in the past twenty years. Though ninety percent of Saudis are ethnically Arab, the globalized era has rendered an increasingly pluralistic society. King Faisal abolished slavery in 1962, creating a great demand for workers. There are 7 million migrant workers, 1.5 million Indians, 1.5 million Bangladeshis, 1.2 million Filipinos, 1 million Pakistanis, 1 million Egyptians, 600,000 Indonesians, 400,000 Sri Lankans, 350,000 Nepalese, 250,000 Palestinians, 150,000 Lebanese, and 100,000 Eritreans.^{ccc} There are approximately 100,000 American and European workers in Saudi Arabia as well. Foreigners comprise 67% of the workforce and hold 90 to 95% of private-sector jobs.^{ccci}

Status of Religious Minorities in Saudi Arabia

Islam is the official state religion and the law mandates all citizens to be Muslims. Non-citizens are required to carry identity cards or, *iqamas*, which identify cardholders as “Muslim” or “non-Muslim.” This is enforced by the *mutawwa’in* or Saudi religious police. There is no constitutional protection for the freedom of religion. Moreover, citizens are not allowed to choose or change their religion. Such apostasy is punishable by death, although there have been no such executions in recent history. Proselytizing by non-Muslims is illegal. Under the legal system, children of all male citizens are considered Muslim, regardless of the religious tradition in which they are raised or born into.

The Government follows the Wahhabi branch of the Hanbali Sunni school and is not tolerant of other sects of Islam. The Government in theory allows Shia Muslims to adopt their own version of Sharia in judicial decisions. However, there are only two Shia judges in the state. The Sunni courts can overrule their judgments at any time.^{ccci}

The Ministry of Islamic Affairs is the administrative authority of all Saudi mosques and imams. The ministry pays imams and mosque workers. The Commission to Promote Virtue and Prevent Vice was established to insure public morality and reports to Royal Diwan.^{ccci} The Government also does not allow non-Muslim clergy to enter the country with the intent of conducting religious services.^{ccci}

Public practice of non-Muslim religions is prohibited. In principle, the Kingdom allows the right to private worship and to use personal religious materials for all citizens, including non-Muslims. Upon entering the state, the Government is required to inform guest workers of their ability to worship privately. However, visitors to Saudi Arabia regularly report the confiscation of private religious material including books and symbols. This right is not codified in law and not generally followed in practice. Individuals do have the ability to petition the Ministry of the Interior, the Human Rights Commission and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs if their right to worship has been challenged. There is no information available publicly on the number of filed claims or the government response.^{ccci}

The Commission to Promote Virtue and Prevent Vice (CPVPV) possesses authority to arrest and detain persons. The *mutawwa’in* are not allowed to legally detain individuals for more than 24 hours, arrest individuals without police accompaniment, adopt surveillance tactics or institute arbitrary punishment. However, the Saudi government has investigated several incidents in which the *mutawwa’in* have transcended these

bounds. Abuses include forced observance of five daily calls to prayer, disrupting the consumption of alcohol and dispersing religious gatherings. A report issued by the CPVPV in January 2007 documented 3,227 *mutawwa'in* in 13 provinces. During the Muslim calendar year (2005-2006), there were 390,117 incidents involving 402,725 persons, of whom only 101, 143 were citizens. Very few of these cases (only 6.4%) were reported to police for legal prosecution.

Additionally, there have been several reports of *mutawwa'in* raids on private residences and deportations of alleged non-Muslims. Some of those convicted received lashes prior to deportation.^{cccvi} Human rights group also reported continued harassment by the religious police, including warnings and short-term detentions. As a result, the country been noted by the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF) as a "Country of Particular Concern."

Religious vigilantes act without orders to harass, assault, and batter non-Muslims. Incidents of abuse are most frequent in the central Nejd region.

The only recognized holidays are Eid al-Fitr and Eid-al-Adha, and a secular Kingdom's National Day. The government allows observance of the Shia holiday of Ashura in only a few limited cities. Public movie cinemas are prohibited. Literature is heavily censored.

Intolerance of other religions is embedded in the kingdom's educational institutions. Education is free for all citizens from preschool through university. Schools teach Islamic law. A study produced by the Institute for Gulf Affairs found that the kingdom's textbooks still encourage intolerance of other religions. The mandated curriculum with textbooks for grades 1 through 12 relies heavily upon the teachings of Ibn 'Abd ul Wahhab. All who are not Wahhabis are treated as outsiders. First grade materials teach that Islam is the only true religion, and fourth grade textbooks forbid Muslims to befriend non-Muslims. Textbooks in tenth grade promote Zionist conspiracy theories and anti-Semitism.^{cccvii} Teachers are obligated to instruct students on the tenets of Islam. In March 2004, a schoolteacher was convicted of blasphemy and sentenced to three years of imprisonment and 300 lashes after teaching students about tolerance. In November 2005, another teacher was sentenced for a similar crime. Both teachers were pardoned by the King in December 2005 in response to international criticism.^{cccviii} Private religious schools are not permitted for non-Muslims or for Muslims adhering to unofficial interpretations of Islam.

Active proselytizing of Islam is encouraged and institutionalized by the government. The Ministry of Islamic Affairs and Center for Islamic Education Foundation sponsors "Call

and Guidance” centers employing 500 persons to convert foreign workers to Islam. The state media reported in 2006 that over 4,200 expatriates of various nationalities converted to Islam in the past ten years.^{cccix} There are reports of several non-Muslims who experienced significant pressure to convert by work colleagues.

Lack of religious freedom is added to the litany of abuses domestic workers face in Saudi Arabia.^{cccx} It is a destination country for workers from South and Southeast Asia. The largest Indian expatriate community is in Saudi Arabia. Eight-five percent of Indians work in unskilled or blue-collar jobs. Such workers face physical and sexual abuse, restriction of movement, and punitive immigration laws.^{cccxi}

Abuse specific to South Asians is prevalent. The Saudis arrested eight Christians from India in May 2005. The previous month, 40 Pakistani Christians were arrested after hosting a joint Catholic-Protestant meeting in a home.^{cccxi} In early August, the government of the Indian state of Andhra Pradesh warned Indians traveling to Saudi Arabia not to carry religious scriptures, photographs or icons. The Indian Ambassador in Riyadh said, “Indian nationals should be strictly briefed against organizing group religious activities in private residences or undertaking missionary or preaching activity.”^{cccxi}

Treatment of Hindus

Islamic law characterizes Hindus as polytheists. This puts Hindus in the same category as those who practice “black magic” or “sorcery.”^{ccciv} This provides for greater discrimination than against Christians and Jews who are classified as “People of the Book.” The “Hanbali” interpretation of Shari’a found that once fault is determined by a court, a Muslim male receives 100 percent of the amount of compensation determined, a male Jew or Christian receives 50 percent, and all others (including Hindus, Buddhists and Sikhs) receive 1/16 of the amount a male Muslim may receive.^{cccvi}

Members of the Commission for the Promotion of Virtue and the Prevention of Vice, or Mutawaa’in, destroyed a room converted into a Hindu temple on March 26, 2005 in Riyadh. The makeshift temple was found accidentally when they were raiding flats suspected of manufacturing alcohol and distributing pornographic videos. The caretaker who was found at the site ignored orders to cease worship. He was deported with two other men who were present and ready to worship. This incident was confirmed by several news agencies, including the Arab Al-Hayat.^{cccvi}

A Western Op-Ed columnist from Saudi Arabia exclaimed in 2006 that he experiences “no religious freedom at all; no priests, no Christian churches are allowed, no Anglican,

Roman Catholic, Baptists or anything else, and the other religions fare no better.” More so, he saw Hindu religious symbols torn from believer’s necks and workers deported for possessing Hindu religious literature.^{cccxvii}

In March 2007, local media noted that the CPVPV interfered with that month's Riyadh Book Fair which included with texts from various faith traditions.

In May 2007, an Indian maid was injured severely after jumping out of her fourth-story apartment in Jeddah in an attempt to escape a *mutawwa'in* raid.

Violations of Constitution and UN Covenants

Saudi Arabia has not signed or ratified the UN’s International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights but its accession to the UN’s International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination took place on September 23, 1997.

Saudi Arabia’s Constitution^{cccxviii} proclaims the kingdom to be “a sovereign Arab Islamic state with Islam as its religion” and “God's Book and the Sunnah of His Prophet” to be its “constitution.” It further declares Arabic to be the national language of the nation. Article 7 states that the government “derives power from the Holy Koran” while Article 8 declares the basis of the government to be “in accordance with the Islamic Shari’ah.” Furthermore, the Constitution states that education should instill “the Islamic faith in the younger generation” and that “the state protects Islam.” Human rights are protected by Article 26 but only in accordance with Shari’ah law.

Saudi Arabia consistently ranks low on international human rights lists. It is 72 out 111 on the Economist’s Worldwide Quality-of-Life Index in 2005.^{cccxix} Transparency International Corruption Perceptions index ranked it 70 out of 163.^{cccxx} The United Nations Human Development Index ranked Saudi Arabia 76 out of 177.^{cccxxi}

Conclusion and Recommendations

The 2003 terrorist attacks in Riyadh triggered a government action against religious extremism. The Government instituted a national dialogue initiative to introduce debate regarding terrorism and extremism. In 2005, the King opened another forum to discuss the growing pluralism of Saudi society, “We and the Other: A National Vision for Dealing with World Cultures.” This was followed in December by a ministerial summit calling for a ten-year-plan of the Muslim world that includes pluralism and moderation. In March 2004, the government established the National Society for Human Rights (NSHR) - the first human rights body to officially operate within the country. The group documented

5,000 cases between March 2004 and February 2006. In response, the government created its Human Rights Commission (HRC) in September 2005. Two HRC board members appointed during this reporting period were Shi'a and Sulaimani Ismaili Shi'a, respectively. The HRC reported that it received more than 8,000 human rights complaints, including infractions by *mutawwa'in*. The king mandated that ministries respond to a HRC complaint within three weeks after it is filed.^{cccxii} The HRC reportedly advised the CPVPV leadership in May 2007 not to interfere with non-Saudi nationals' private religious activities.

More recently, the government reiterated its policy to combat extremism within the country and abroad. It has committed to reviewing educational materials to remove degrading references to other faith traditions. It is monitoring sermons at government sponsored mosques and states intent to dismiss imams whose preaching promotes extremism. In response to growing concerns about the *mutawwa'in* and CPVPV the government has permitted significant media criticism.

The Saudi Government has appointed more Shi'a judges to the Ja'afari courts in the Eastern Province and one Shi'a and one Sulaimani Ismaili Shi'a to the board of the Government's Human Rights Commission (HRC). According to the US State Department Report on International Religious Freedom 2007, there were fewer reports of confiscation of religious materials at the airports in Jeddah and Dhahran, and fewer *mutawwa'in* raids of religious gatherings in the Western Hijaz region and in the Eastern Province. Additionally, larger public and private celebrations of Shi'a holidays were permitted in the Eastern Province.

Saudi officials have also hosted summits on education. The Sixth National Dialogue Forum, entitled "Education: Reality and Promises" included a "road map" for educational reform, including textbook revision, and teaching curriculum. In February 2007, the government launched the King Abdullah Project for the Development of Public Education, a \$2.4 billion, 6-year program to improve public education. Included in this transformation is a goal to revise textbooks and make materials more inclusive. In March 2007, the civil service announced it would dismiss teachers who espoused extremist view in the classroom. In April 2007, King Abdullah announced that the Government would allocate more freedom to private school development.

The establishment of procedural mechanisms to address human rights in Saudi Arabia is welcome, and the inclusion of both public and non-governmental sectors is a step forward. However, the nature of the Saudi state and the religious dynamic in the region that is funded, supported, and encouraged by the government are the real, serious

impediments to establishing religious pluralism and the treatment of non-Muslims as co-equals of Muslims.

The United States government must insist on a better human rights record. Senior U.S. officials have begun such a dialogue with Saudi leaders on key policies regarding religious practice and tolerance. The US-Saudi Strategic Dialogue includes among its working groups the promotion of religious freedom. However, more must be done. The political and religious dynamic in the region can only change when Saudi Arabia is pressured to change its Islamist agenda. Saudi Arabia must end its support for terrorism and fundamentalist Islam, promote basic civil and religious rights for its citizens and guest workers, and reform its education system in order to remove inaccuracies and hatred about other religions. It should instead promote tolerance and pluralism.

Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka



Figure 9: Map of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka

© CIA World Factbook

Area: 65,610 sq km

Population: 20,926,315 (Note: Since the outbreak of hostilities between the government and armed Tamil separatists in the mid-1980s, several hundred thousand Tamil civilians have fled the island and more than 200,000 Tamils have sought refuge in the West)

Ethnic groups: Sinhalese 73.8%, Sri Lankan Moors 7.2%, Indian Tamil 4.6%, Sri Lankan Tamil 3.9%, other 0.5%, unspecified 10% (2001 census provisional data)

Religion: Buddhist 69.1%, Muslim 7.6%, Hindu 7.1%, Christian 6.2%, unspecified 10% (2001 census provisional data)

Languages: Sinhala (official/national language) 74%, Tamil (national language) 18%, other 8%. English is used in government and is spoken competently by about 10% of the population.

Location: Southern Asia, island in the Indian Ocean, south of India ^{cccxxiii}

Introduction

The human rights situation in Sri Lanka worsened in 2007. As we have previously noted, the violent conflict between the Sinhala-majority government and Tamil terrorists groups is not a religious conflict, but rather a deeply complex problem involving a combination of historical, geographical, ethnic, linguistic and religious factors. For example, the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), the primary Tamil militant organization, does not identify itself as a religious-based organization.

The Sri Lankan civil war is an ongoing conflict that has been taking place since 1983 between the majority Sinhala Sri Lankan government and the LTTE. The LTTE is fighting for an independent state (Tamil Eelam) in the North and East regions of the island. A cease-fire was declared by both parties in December 2001. Norwegian-brokered peace talks led to a ceasefire agreement between the government and Tamil rebels in late 2002, but both the government and Tamil rebels violated the truce. Renewed hostilities broke out again in late 2005 with increasing intensity. Both sides claimed that they were willing to abide by the ceasefire agreement, eventually leading to a settlement. Throughout the years, both parties have committed extrajudicial killings, abductions, participated in communal violence, and intentionally attacked civilians.^{cccxxiv}

The Sri Lankan government ended its truce with the LTTE on January 2, 2008, causing great concern among international arbiters. The civil war has taken a heavy toll on this island nation, killing nearly 5,000 people since early 2006, and a total of 70,000 deaths since the war erupted in 1983. Moreover, the fighting has left hundreds of thousands of civilians, primarily Tamils, displaced from their homes, while more than 100,000 were forced to flee in March 2007 alone.^{cccxxv}

According to news reports, the International Coordinating Committee of National Institutions for the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights (ICC) – the international body that regulates national human rights institutions – reduced Sri Lanka’s National Human Rights Commission to the status of an “observer” because of government encroachment on its independence.^{cccxxvi}

History

The Sinhalese arrived in Sri Lanka in the 6th century BCE, probably from Northern India. Buddhism was introduced around mid-third century BCE, and a great civilization developed at the cities of Anuradhapura (from circa 200 BCE to circa 1000 CE) and Polonnaruwa (from about 1070 to 1200 CE). In the 14th century, a south Indian dynasty seized power in the north and established a Tamil kingdom. Occupied by the

Portuguese in the 16th century and by the Dutch in the 17th century, the island was ceded to the British in 1796, became a crown colony in 1802, and was united under British rule by 1815. As Ceylon, it became independent in 1948; its name was changed to Sri Lanka in 1972. Tensions between the Sinhalese majority and Tamil separatists in northern Sri Lanka erupted into war in 1983. Tens of thousands have died in an ethnic conflict that continues to be unresolved. After two decades of fighting, the government and LTTE formalized a cease-fire in February 2002, with Norway brokering peace negotiations. Violence between the LTTE and government forces intensified in 2006, and now the Sri Lanka government has formally withdrawn from the cease-fire.

The original inhabitants of the island were believed to be the aboriginal Veddahs. The Sinhalese believe they are descendants of King Vijaya who came from Eastern India with a small army and conquered the island and settled there around the 6th century BCE.

Between 237 BCE to 1070 CE, Sri Lankan Buddhists and various Indian kings, mainly Tamils, fought each other. Indian kings and Hinduism dominated most of the time during this period. King Vijayabahu drove the Cholas, a South Indian Hindu dynasty, out of Sri Lanka and re-established the pre-eminence of Buddhism on the island. Subsequently, it became mandatory for the Sinhalese king to be a Buddhist. Later the country was divided and ruled by separate kings until the Europeans conquered the island.^{cccxxvii}

The Portuguese arrived in 1505 and controlled most of the island by 1595. In 1658, the Dutch, assisted by the king of Kandy, forced Portugal out. The British expelled the Dutch in 1796 and conquered the entire island in 1815 after defeating the king of Kandy. The country was named as Ceylon with Colombo as the capital.

The Europeans established tea, coffee, sugar, cinnamon, rubber and indigo plantations on the island, and the British brought nearly one million Tamil laborers from India to work in the tea plantations.

In the 1900s the Ceylonese started a struggle for independence from the ruling British. On February 4, 1948 the country won its independence. In 1970, the name was changed to Sri Lanka and it became a republic in 1972.

Sinhala-Tamil Divide

The island's population is approximately 75% Sinhalese and 7-8% Tamils. The south, west and central regions of the island are primarily inhabited by the Sinhalese, while the Tamils are in the north and the east and on the plantations in the central hills. The Tamil north-east covers an area of about 7,500 square miles. The Sinhalese majority are Buddhist, while most Tamils are Hindus and some are Christians.

By 1948, there were more English-language schools in the Tamil-dominated Jaffna city than in the rest of the island. A disproportionate number of Tamils occupied positions of prominence in post-independence Sri Lanka, such as doctors, and lawyers in the civil service. This led to Sinhalese resentment and a perception that the British gave preferential treatment to the Tamils.^{cccxxviii}

Sinhala Buddhist revivalism and nationalism had its origin in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Even before Sri Lanka became independent, Buddhist activists and ideologues -- monks and laypersons, educators and politicians -- accused the British of “betraying” Buddhism and spoke of a need to restore Buddhism to its rightful place in the life and governance of the country.^{cccxxix}

Sinhala Buddhist revivalism and nationalism was supported by and served the interests of a rising Sinhala Buddhist middle class and businessmen, some of whom were implicated in the anti-Muslim riots of 1915, which were directed against Muslim shopkeepers and businessmen.^{cccxxx}

The Jaffna Association (JA) was the only political organization of Jaffna Tamils. They wanted self-determination for Tamils in the North and East of the island. The JA was involved directly in much of Jaffna’s social and economic development, and Tamil political aspirations. In 1915 the British agreed to nominate a JA leader as the Tamil member of the Legislative Council. In 1919 the Ceylon National Congress (CNC) was formed for obtaining greater autonomy for the people.

Initially, the Jaffna Association wanted to negotiate separately with the British to protect minority rights. However, Sir P. Arunachalam, a good friend of JA leaders, persuaded Tamils to forge a united front with the Sinhalese to achieve more authority for the entire island. The Sinhalese assured the Tamils of an agreed number of conditions, including Tamil Eelam, but refused to keep their promises. This led to a feeling of disillusionment and betrayal among the Tamil Leadership, and in 1921 the Tamils formed the Tamil Mahajana Sabham (TMS).

Ceylon won its independence from the British in 1948.^{cccxxxi} When the British departed, power was transferred to the Sinhala majority, although Tamil leaders were in the forefront of the freedom movement. Following independence, the government of D. S. Senanayake passed legislation in 1949, stripping the citizenship of a sizable number of Tamil descendants of plantation laborers from India, leaving them stateless. This reduced the Tamil voting power in parliament from 33% to 20%. Furthermore, in 1962 and again in 1965, several hundred thousands of Tamils who worked in the estates were expelled by the Sri Lankan government. Many of these Tamils were not granted full citizenship rights until 2003.^{cccxxxii}

Successive governments pursued resettlement policies, bringing Sinhalese from the south and settling them into Tamil areas in the north and east. This became a further source of tension between Sinhalese, Tamil, and Muslim communities. The Trincomalee district was colonized by the Sinhalese with the help of the government in 1948, and in the 1950s and 1960s. The Sinhalese population grew from 4.4% in 1946 to 29.1% in 1981. There was an official plan in the mid-1980s to settle 30,000 Sinhalese in the Northern Province, giving each settler land and funds to build a house. Each community was armed with rifles and machine guns for protection.

In the 1990s Tamils were driven out from Weli Oya or Manal Aru in the Northern Province, and the Sinhalese settled there; security was provided by the Special Task Force.^{cccxxxiii}

The Official Language policy forced through the “Sinhala only Act” of 1956 replaced official English with Sinhala, and excluded Tamil. As a result, countless Tamils serving in government employment, who were well versed in English but not in Sinhalese, became unemployed. In practice, the business of government continues to be carried out in English, though the Sinhalese version is preferred.^{cccxxxiv}

The 1958 riots can be seen as the beginning of the Sri Lankan Civil War. While the “Sinhala Only” Act passed in 1956, Prime Minister Bandaranaike worked with the Tamil Federal Party Chief Chelvanayakam to make Tamil the administrative language in the Tamil-speaking north and east regions through the Bandaranaike-Chelvanayakam Pact of 1957. However, Bandaranaike reneged under pressure from Sinhalese nationalists. The Federal Party politicians launched a peaceful protest against this decision, and planned to hold a convention in Vavuniya. To disrupt the convention, on May 22, 1958, Sinhalese mobs attacked the convention participants traveling by trains.

In response to the attacks by Sinhalese extremists, Tamils rioted in the east and killed 56 Sinhalese fishermen. Moreover, in Jaffna the Buddhist Naga Vihara temple was destroyed, and some Sinhalese owned businesses were burned. Overall, the 1958 riots led to between 150 and 200 Tamil deaths, with thousands more assaulted. The violence also resulted in the looting of Tamil owned properties, and the displacement of more than 25,000 Tamil refugees, who were relocated to the north.^{cccxxxv}

In 1970, the government began to suppress Tamil culture by banning the importation of Tamil language films, books, magazines, and journals from India. Additionally, Tamil political organizations, such as the Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK) and the Tamil Youth League (TYL) were banned. Foreign exchange programs for Tamil students going to Indian universities were stopped, and external degree programs, including those of London University, were abolished.^{cccxxxvi} The official name of the country was also changed from Ceylon to Sri Lanka, which had Sinhalese origins. All of these steps alienated large segments of the Tamil population.

The idea of a separate nation -- Tamil Eelam -- emerged in 1972 with the formation of the Tamil United Liberation Front (TULF). TULF was prohibited from contesting parliamentary elections.

Between May 31 and June 2, 1981, a Sinhalese mob went on a rampage, burning the market area of Jaffna, the office of a Tamil newspaper, the home of the Member of Parliament for Jaffna, the Jaffna Public Library, and killing four people. The destruction of the Jaffna Public Library was the incident that appeared to cause the most distress to the people of Jaffna, as it was South Asia's largest library at the time. The 95,000 volumes in the Public Library destroyed by the fire included numerous culturally important and irreplaceable manuscripts. Later, in 1991 the then president of Sri Lanka publicly admitted that his party members, Lalith Athulathmudali and Gamini Dissanayake, were directly involved in the burning of the library.^{cccxxxvii}

The next significant event was the "Black July" riots, which began after 25 years of negotiations for autonomy for Tamil speaking areas under a federal framework failed. Started on July 23, 1983, the riots led to the killing of between 1,000 and 3,000 Tamils. More than 18,000 homes and numerous commercial establishments were destroyed, and hundreds of thousands of Tamils fled the country to India, Europe, Australia and Canada. The widespread violence led thousands of Tamil youths to join various Tamil militant groups, including the LTTE.

Many young Tamils favored using violent means to achieve their ends, and in 1972 the Tamil New Tigers (TNT) was founded. TNT was led by Velupillai Prabhakaran. The TNT was responsible for several high profile assassinations, including Alfred Duraipappah, the Mayor of Jaffna in 1975, and some police officials. They committed bank robberies to fund their activities. In 1976, TNT joined the Subramaniam group to form the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), also known as the Tamil Tigers, later joined by Anton Balasingham. On July 23, 1983, LTTE ambushed and killed 13 government soldiers in Jaffna. On July 25, the 13 soldiers were to be buried in Colombo. Sinhalese civilians who had gathered at the cemetery started killing Tamils, and looting and burning property. The violence directed against Tamils in Colombo, soon spread throughout the country. Initially, 20,000 Tamils in Colombo became displaced, and the figure gradually rose to 50,000.^{cccxxviii}

Over the next 25 years, there would be many more casualties, ceasefires, undermined ceasefires, a failed peacekeeping mission during the Rajiv Gandhi-led Government of India, and the introduction of suicide bombings as a lethal weapon for the first time in modern history. A suicide mission, allegedly by an LTTE sympathizer took the life of Indian Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi in 1985.

Human Rights Abuses in 2007

There were a total of 4,377 deaths recorded in Sri Lanka in terrorist-related events in 2007.^{cccxxix} Of those, 525 were civilians, 500 were Sri Lankan military/police personnel, and 3,352 insurgents. Vavuniya, Trincomalee, Mannar, and Jaffna were the most violence-hit districts.

Specific instances of human rights abuse are hard to identify in this complex battle over hearts, minds, and land. Some of the government actions, in their bid to defeat the LTTE, have the characteristics of intentionally targeting the Tamil minority. A Human Rights Watch (HRW) report in August accused the Sri Lankan government of increased human rights abuses. The 129-page report documents the “shocking increase in violations” by government forces, and says that ethnic Tamils have borne the brunt of these violations.^{cccxi} The following include examples of human rights violations occurring in 2007:

- On February 7, 2007, members of the LTTE killed the Head Priest of a Hindu temple at Sandiveli Pullair Kovil in Batticaloa.^{cccxli}
- On June 7, 2007 police evicted Tamil men, women, and children lodged in low-budget hostels, and bused them off under armed escorts. The action followed

the Inspector General of Police, Victor Perera's announcement that Tamils "loitering" in Colombo were a threat to national security, and that they would be returned to their villages.^{cccxlvi}

- A Colombo judge ordered the release of a Tamil-Hindu priest accused of helping the LTTE. The priest and the trustee of the temple were arrested in May 2007 after explosives were found hidden in the temple premises. It has been reported that the LTTE has used places of worship, including temples and churches, as safe haven or storage places.^{cccxlvii}
- Government used anti-terrorism laws to shut down newspapers that reported human rights abuses by government forces.^{cccxlvi}
- The police arrested more than 1000 Tamils in response to the suicide bombings carried out in Colombo on November 28, 2007. According to the Amnesty International, "Tamils were bundled in bus loads and taken for interrogation". More than 400 of those arrested, including 50 women, were taken to the Boosa Camp near Galle in the south, a facility that is reportedly overcrowded, lacking proper sanitation facilities and adequate drinking water.^{cccxlv}

Forced Disappearances

Forced abductions and disappearances at the hands of security forces and pro-government militias are one of the major human rights abuses prevalent in Sri Lanka. According to international law, "an enforced disappearance occurs when state authorities detain a person and then refuse to acknowledge the deprivation of liberty or the person's whereabouts, placing the person outside the protection of the law."^{cccxlv} Between 1988 and 1990 alone, there were reportedly more than 27,200 cases of disappearances. Moreover, 16,305 cases of past abductions are still being investigated by the Human Rights Commission of Sri Lanka (HRCSL).^{cccxlvii} In addition, a report by Human Rights Watch (HRW) claims that there were at least 1,000 forced disappearances in 2006, and 300 in the first four months of 2007 alone. The vast majority of victims are young Tamil men suspected of having ties to the Tamil Tigers.^{cccxlviii}

Recruitment of Child Soldiers

The recruitment of young child soldiers, some as young as 12, is a common practice employed by government forces, pro-government militias, and Tamil rebel groups. Often, the children, both girls and boys, are abducted from their parents and forced into fighting.^{cccxlix} A recent report by UNICEF detailed 1,430 outstanding cases of child recruitment by the LTTE, with at least 196 children under the age of 18 still fighting with the Tamil group. During a two week period in January 2007, 37 under age children were

abducted by the LTTE in the areas of Arippe, Karanadi, and Madukkarai.^{cccl} Besides the Tamil Tigers, pro-government militias also systematically abduct and recruit children as soldiers. These militias are allowed to operate freely in areas controlled by government forces, and the Sri Lankan army often actively assists them in kidnapping young boys.^{cccli}

Violations of Constitution and UN Covenants

Sri Lanka's accession to UN's International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights on June 11, 1980 and its accession to the UN's International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination took place on February 18, 1982.

The Constitution of Sri Lanka^{ccclii} declares it to be a "democratic socialist republic" which provides Buddhism "the foremost place" but still assures "all religions the rights granted by Articles 10 and 14 (1)(e)." Article 10 provides "freedom of thought, conscience and religion" to every individual and Article 14 (1)(e) provides every citizen the freedom "to manifest his religion or belief in worship, observance, practice or teaching." Additionally, Article 14 entitles citizens to freedom of speech, peaceful assembly, and association, as well as the freedom "to enjoy and promote his own culture and to use his own language." The Constitution further guarantees equality before the law and bars discrimination based on race, religion, caste, or language.

Conclusion and Recommendations

According to a recent Congressional Human Rights Caucus (CHRC) briefing^{cccliii} the more than two-decade old conflict between the Sinhalese majority and the Tamil minority in Sri Lanka escalated significantly in 2006. The number of people killed in this heightened conflict is in dispute, with the LTTE, classified by the United States as a terrorist organization, disputing government claims. The CHRC briefing noted that "the escalating violence is pushing the country back onto the slippery road toward outright civil war."

International mediation and good faith efforts seem to have led to dead ends, and unless the Sri Lankan government makes serious efforts to devolve rights to the minorities, and protect minority interests, the brunt of the violence and displacement will be faced by the Tamil and Hindu minorities. There can be no military solution to ethnic conflicts.

In 1970 the Federal Party submitted proposals to the Ministry of Constitutional Affairs for: A federal form of government with an autonomous Tamil state, an autonomous Muslim state and three autonomous Sinhala states; The Tamil Language Regulations of 1966 to be incorporated into the Constitution; Mother tongue to be the compulsory

medium of instruction for all Tamil children.^{cccliv} Some form of autonomously governed regionalization may be part of a solution that international agencies and negotiators can work towards.

It is important to recognize that unless the LTTE eschews terrorism the solution to the conflict will be postponed. Without pressure from international arbitrators, the war of attrition will continue in Sri Lanka and it is imperative that such pressure be brought to bear upon the more than three decades old conflict.

Republic of Trinidad and Tobago



Figure 10: Map of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago

© CIA World Factbook

Area: 5,128 sq km

Population: 1,056,608 (July 2007 est.)

Religions: Roman Catholic 26%, Hindu 22.5%, Anglican 7.8%, Baptist 7.2%, Pentecostal 6.8%, Muslim 5.8%, Seventh Day Adventist 4%, other Christian 5.8%, other 10.8%, unspecified 1.4%, none 1.9% (2000 census). Almost all Hindus are of Indian descent.

Ethnic groups: Indian (South Asian) 40%, African 37.5%, mixed 20.5%, other 1.2%, unspecified 0.8% (2000 census)

Languages: English (official), Caribbean Hindustani (a dialect of Hindi), French, Spanish, Chinese

Location: Caribbean, islands between the Caribbean Sea and the North Atlantic Ocean, northeast of Venezuela^{ccclv}

History^{ccclvi}

The Republic of Trinidad and Tobago is an archipelagic state in the southern Caribbean. The country consists of two main islands, Trinidad and Tobago, and 21 smaller islands.

Trinidad is the larger and more populous of the main islands; Tobago is much smaller, comprising about 6% of the total area and 4% of the population.

Originally settled by Amerindians of South American origin at least 7,000 years ago, Trinidad and Tobago was occupied by Arawakan-speaking and Cariban-speaking peoples at the time of European contact in 1498. A history of slavery and indentureship has left the country with a mixture of African, Indian, mixed-race, European, Middle Eastern and Chinese people. All these groups have left an imprint on the national culture.

Britain consolidated its hold on both islands during the Napoleonic Wars, and they were combined into the colony of Trinidad and Tobago in 1899. As a result of these colonial struggles, Amerindian, Spanish, French and English place names are all common in the country. African slaves and Chinese, Portuguese, Indian, and free African indentured laborers arrived to supply labor in the nineteenth and early twentieth century. Emigration from Barbados and the other Lesser Antilles, Venezuela, Syria, and Lebanon also impacted on the ethnic make-up of the country.

Trinidad and Tobago elected for independence in 1962. In 1976 the country severed its links with the British monarchy and became a republic within the Commonwealth.

Trinidad and Tobago is a democratic republic. The Head of State of Trinidad and Tobago is the President, and the Head of Government is the Prime Minister. The President is elected by an Electoral College consisting of the full membership of both houses of Parliament. The Prime Minister is appointed by the President.

In the recent past, there have been three elections in three years contested by the two main ethnic-based parties, the United National Congress (UNC) and the People's National Movement (PNM). Indians largely support the UNC led by Basdeo Panday, while Africans mainly support the PNM headed by Patrick Manning. The party lines are not completely polarized along racial lines. In most recent elections, the PNM fielded Indian candidates for election. The main financial backer of the UNC is an Afro-Trinidadian.

In 2002, the PNM won with 51% of the vote. This allowed Manning to replace Panday as Trinidadian Prime Minister. The most recent elections in November 2007 were also won by the PNM under Manning.

Religious Pluralism in Trinidad and Tobago

Trinidadian society is multiethnic and multireligious. Religious tolerance is instilled very early in life. It is rare in its intersection of faith and diversity of religious traditions.

Legally, the Constitution of Trinidad and Tobago guarantees the right to equality of treatment and freedom of religious belief and observance. Furthermore, the government limits the number of foreign missionaries allowed in the country to 30 per denomination at any given time. In response to wariness of a repeated colonial experience, missionaries must meet strict entry standards and cannot remain in the country for more than three years per visit. There are no reports of forced religious conversion.

The Government established public holidays for every religious group with a large following. The Government grants financial and technical assistance to various organizations to support religious festivals and celebrations, including Indian Arrival Day.

The Government supports the activities of the Inter-Religious Organization (IRO). The IRO is the interfaith coordinating committee for public outreach, governmental and media relations, and policy implementation. It also provides the prayer leader for several official events, such as the opening of Parliament and the annual court term.

Ministers, Members of Parliament, and public figures represented every religious group and denomination and the broad spectrum of religious beliefs in the country.

Religious groups possess same rights and obligations as most legal entities. They can own land and hire employees.

The Government subsidizes both public and religiously affiliated schools. It permits religious instruction in public schools, setting aside a time each week when any religious organization with an adherent in the school can provide an instructor. Attendance at these classes is voluntary, and the religious groups represented are diverse. Parents may enroll their children in private schools for religious reasons. As a result, there are thriving Hindu, Muslim and Christian schools for K-12.

Treatment of Hindus in Trinidad and Tobago

In this report, it is essential to differentiate between religious and racial discrimination. Discrimination towards Indians and racial tension between Hindus and African-Americans is evident. However, it is difficult to distinguish specific religious persecution

given that 90% of Indians are Hindu. To honor accuracy in documentation, this report attempts to resist conflation.

Despite legal protections and the value of religious pluralism, Hindus (as Indians) in Trinidad and Tobago experience discrimination.^{ccclvii} This can be grouped in terms of political representation, resource distribution and the employment market. Social discrimination is also evident in terms of media portrayal, cultural celebrations and the education system. Last, there seems to be excessive violence towards Hindus and police complicity in such attacks.

Dr. Eric Williams, the country's first Prime Minister referred to Indians as the "recalcitrant minority." The racial and religious animosity between black (Christian and Muslim) and brown (Hindu, Indian) has been exacerbated over the years, and is manifest in media and government.

Prominent Hindu leader and Secretary General of the Hindu Maha Sabha, Sat Maharaj, exclaimed in 2006 that "This year marks 50 years since Trinidad and Tobago attained the right to internal self-government (1956-1986). Out of this 50-year period an Indian-based political party held power for six years. The People's National Movement (PNM) ruled for 30 consecutive years without appointing a single Hindu as a government minister. The cry of rural neglect, alienation, marginalization and discrimination affected the political psychology of Indians as they lost hope of ever winning a general election."^{ccclviii} Evidence of Maharaj's political alienation is evident in the recently-formed Caribbean Court of Justice in which there is not a single judge of Indian origin.

Allegations of institutional discrimination were recently directed at the Government after several Indians and Hindus were fired or denied well-deserved promotions. Assistant Commissioner of Valuations Ganga Persad Kissoon successfully sought an interim injunction blocking the Prime Minister from filling the post. In doing so, he joined the ranks of NLCB marketing manager Devant Maharaj, who successfully took the Statutory Authorities Service Commission (SASC) along with the Prime Minister to court after he was bypassed for promotion after the PM's veto of the SASC recommendation that he be appointed NLCB deputy director. Executive Foreign Service Officer II Feroza Ramjohn, appointed in an emergency to replace diplomat Bissoon Boodhai during the investigation of cocaine in a diplomatic pouch, found her own appointment rescinded and that matter is before the courts. According to Indian leaders, "The work ethic of the *jahajis* (Indian Indentured Immigrants) and their descendants, which saved the country, turned out to be a double-edged sword for them. The ability to work hard and make personal sacrifices for the economic and educational progress of themselves and their

family coupled with their cultural practices made them a self-reliant sub-society,” says Dr. Prakash Persad, Chairman of SWAHA, a Hindu social service organization in Trinidad.^{ccclix}

In the Police Service, the Protective Services, the Civil Service, the Statutory Boards and Commissions, the High Commissions and Diplomatic Missions abroad, the Central bank, and recipients of National Awards, Indians are systematically excluded. According to one observer, the “Indo-Trinidadian community is witnessing a ‘shock and awe’ programme with this state-sanctioned policy that directs significant state resources to one ethnic group at the exclusion of other groups. The lowering of qualifications for state employment, house padding, the establishment of the University of Trinidad and Tobago, the elevation of criminal elements to community leaders, the proposal of a political union with other Caribbean islands without national consultations and state-sponsored projects such as CEPEP and HYPE are all examples of the programme conceived to push the Indian out of the space that is shared in Trinidad and Tobago. Using the police force to raid the Chief Justice’s office and seize sensitive legal documents while the Chief Justice himself was representing our country in Czechoslovakia is viewed by us as a clear violation of the separation of powers principle.”^{ccclx}

The racial imbalance in the appointment of top officials is also evident. New ambassadors of the country do not include Indian Trinidadians.

“At a state enterprise . . . about eight employees of the same ethnicity come through the door, before one of a different ethnicity appeared. Last year, a client for whom I was doing a discrimination case compiled a racial pie chart of the most senior and powerful offices in the public service (heads of divisions, directors, chief technical officers, heads of departments and permanent secretaries), using information supplied by service commissions. Of the 105 names listed, there were only 18 Indians. Today, there is no Indo on the executive of our police service and army.”^{ccclxi}

There also seems to be inequity in the distribution of public funding. This is evident in funds allocated to religious sites, public housing and even response to natural disasters. In a recent Joint Select Committee of Parliament meeting chaired by Independent Senator Parvatee Anmolsingh-Mahabir, the National Social Development Programme (NSDP) was exposed as a State agency that is blatant in its discrimination against Hindus, Muslims, Catholics and Anglicans. Predominantly Afro-Trinidadian Christian denominations are instead favored. Senator Wade Mark lamented the fact that millions of taxpayers’ dollars had been spent on St Peter’s Baptist Church, the Jesus Elam

Ministries, Febeau Open Bible, Revival Time Assembly and other small politically affiliated churches. Senator Mark asked: “What criteria was (sic) used to allocate money? Are the Hindus excluded?”^{ccclxii}

Indo-Trinidadians believe that there is an ethnic agenda in the Government’s distribution of the largesse of the State. This centers upon the distribution of the homes under the National Housing Authority (Home Development Corporation), which seems to be predominantly allocated to Afro-Trinidadians. In response to accusations of discrimination against Indians in allocation of public housing, Housing Minister Dr. Rowley said, “This Government is not anti-Indian”. He said 60% of applicants on the Housing Ministry’s database are of African descent from the East/West Corridor. He blamed propaganda from the Opposition party for the fact that fewer applications come from Indians in rural and semi-rural areas.^{ccclxiii}

There are allegations of inequities in the manner in which aid and compensation are disbursed after natural disasters. After seasonal flooding destroyed their crops, cooks – all of African descent - at the Breakfast Shed in the capital city of Port-of-Spain were each given \$32,000 and new premises built for them after flooding. Thirty-six million dollars were given to the port retirees and the Toco flood victims who got immediate help, but nothing was provided for South or Central farmers – almost 100% Hindus -- who lost millions in flood damage.

There are also perceptions of inequitable employment. Employment discrimination against Indians is prevalent in the armed forces, the public service, state companies, and Board and executive membership at decision-making levels of the State. This change has occurred since the PNM took office in 2002.

Of the 31 senior First Division Officers that were promoted in the police service only seven were Indo-Trinidadians. Indians are a minority in these services in a country in which they comprise half of the population. The last survey conducted by the Centre for Ethnic Studies, found a glaring under-representation of Indians in the protective services.

In a 1990s report, researchers concluded that Indians were “heavily under-represented, except in areas where merit and technical criteria must prevail, as in the judicial and professional sectors, where Indians were more than adequately represented.” Past information from the Service Commissions Department found that there are only 18 Indians serving as department heads in the nation, compared to 87 non-Indians.

As seen above, political and economic discrimination is evident in inequality of representation, inconsistent resource allocation and the employment market. Social persecution is also evident in terms of media portrayal, celebration of religious holidays and education.

The inequality in political representation and government recognition occurs also in media portrayal. The concerted media attack against three prominent Hindus in 2006 (former Prime Minister Basdeo Panday, Professor Vijay Naraynsingh, and Chief Justice Satnarine Sharma), and the forced resignations of several top Indian professionals are worrisome. Hindus fear a systematized attempt to both degrade Hindus in media and exclude them from areas of influence.^{ccclxiv}

Photographs in tourism brochures depict Trinidad and Tobago as a nation whose population is of predominantly African descent. The Indian image is virtually non-existent. Foreigners often express surprise that Indians constitute the largest ethnic group. Indians, especially the Indian male – rarely appear in advertisements in radio, television, and print media.

Discrimination also occurs in the celebration of religious holidays. Hindus are prevented from holding Diwali and Ramleela (major annual Hindu festivals) celebrations in several areas of the country. For example, the head of the Sugarcane Feeds Centre refused permission for workers to hold their annual Diwali celebrations. In addition, Hindu Police officers were prevented from celebrating Diwali at their workplaces in South Trinidad. Popular Ramleela groups do not receive adequate funding, especially in comparison to Christian events. The Tourism Development Company has devoted millions to the celebration of Gospelfest, for instance, while neglecting Ramleela, the largest open-air theatre in the country.

Educational discrimination is also manifest. Although Hinduism is the second largest religion in Trinidad and Tobago, there are no sixth-form Hindu secondary schools to prepare students for university; there are 18 Christian and two Muslim sixth-form facilities. In many primary and secondary schools and colleges, Hindu children are prevented from practicing their religion and debarred from wearing Hindu clothing, *rakshas* (protective amulet), and other accessories. “I view ... with great concern, the growing number of denominational schools which are insisting that the *raksha* should be removed or hidden under a watch. It is a positive symbol.... Certain denominational schools are forcing all students to study the religion of the school, without introducing the appropriate religious instruction for students of other religions.... The Ministry of Education needs to correct these discriminatory practices, especially in the

denominational school,” said David Singh in a letter to the Trinidad Guardian Newspaper.^{ccclxv}

Violence directed against Indians and Hindus is also not uncommon. Indians and Hindus are verbally and physically assaulted by mobs of non-Indians from neighboring villages and from the northern urban areas of Trinidad where the population is predominantly African. The Hindus of Felicity were attacked by Afro-Trinidadians from the adjacent village of Boot Hill. Residents of Felicity were unable to commute to work and schools after Afro-Trinidadians from Boot Hill blocked the main road leading out of Felicity with piles of burning debris and broken bottles.^{ccclxvi}

Instances of Discrimination against Hindus of Trinidad and Tobago in 2007

1. Tobago Mandir

Until recently, the Tobago House of Assembly refused to allow the Maha Sabha to construct a *mandir* (temple) on land bought on the island. Churches were funded and the Assembly promoted a gospel concert on the island while refusing to fund a *kirtan* (Hindu religious concert).^{ccclxvii} Letters to editors complaining about the overt discrimination against Hindus had little impact on the assemblymen.^{ccclxviii} After a five-year struggle, the first Hindu Mandir is to be constructed in Tobago with a \$250,000 grant from the National Commission for Self Help Limited (NCSH).^{ccclxix} Construction began in the summer of 2007.

2. Diwali/Deepavali – The Hindu Festival of Lights

Hindus in Trinidad and Tobago face challenges each year when they attempt to organize and hold Diwali celebrations. In October 2006, an Anglican School in Fyzabad, South Trinidad withdrew permission previously granted to students for celebrating Diwali. Students were banned from wearing *rakhi* (a religious symbol worn as a wrist band) even though Diwali is a national holiday.^{ccclxx}

The largest Diwali celebrations are held each year at the Diwali Nagar, Chaguanas, in Trinidad. This event has grown from a modest affair to an international fixture in the Hindu calendar, attracting Hindus from around the world. Each night, over a 14-day period, thousands of Hindus and non-Hindus congregate at this famous location to enjoy and participate in *pujas* (sacred ritual), concerts, art, craft, and social activities. In 2006 and in 2007, the police refused to provide additional security unless they were

paid. During the first few nights when the police stayed away, several vehicles were stolen and vandalized. It was only after protests by Hindus that security was increased.

This major event was granted a meager \$TT 200,000 (approximately U.S. \$33,000) by the Government. This is a small amount compared to the funds available for Christian celebrations.

3. Ramleela

Though Ramleela is the longest surviving open-air theatre in the Caribbean and it has grown in recent times, Trinidad and Tobago refuses to embrace Ramleela as its own. The government and media have hardly supported the festival, which is in the same category as Tobago Heritage Festival. The National Ramleela Council (NRC) was informed by the Ministry of Culture that the ten groups participating in Carifesta IX would not be getting their annual grant to stage Ramleela in their village. Deosaran Sankar, vice-president of the NRC, said the organization received \$28,500 (U.S. \$4,500) from the Carifesta IX committee to stage celebrations for Carifesta. In contrast, he said government grants other religious organizations hundreds of thousands of dollars to defray expenses in staging their religious activities.

Non-Hindus have targeted the Ramleela festival during the past few years. In 2005, vandals desecrated religious items and tore up props used in Ramleela celebrations at Mc Bean Village, Couva. The sacred *jhandi* (flag to mark the completion of *puja* or worship ceremony), tents, props and fencing had been destroyed and Hindus were afraid to go to celebrations in Mc Bean because of the presence of hooligans during celebrations.^{ccclxxi}

4. Hindu Radio Station

After a long seven year legal struggle, the Sanatan Dharma Maha Sabha of Trinidad and Tobago (SDMS) was granted the license to broadcast as Radio Jaagriti on 102.7FM.

SDMS initiated the application in 1999 which languished for seven years, while the government awarded another group a radio frequency for its station. In February 2004, the SDMS won its discrimination case against the Government of Trinidad and Tobago. Presiding San Fernando High Court Justice Carlton Best ruled that the SDMS was treated unequally when the Cabinet bypassed its application, stating that SDMS had been denied equality of treatment before the law by the State.

On July 4, 2006, SDMS was victorious in its appeal to the Privy Council against the government because of the government's consistent refusal to award the organization a radio license. In a landmark 19-page judgment Lord Justice Mance said "in light of the

exceptional circumstances” of the discrimination, the Privy Council would order Trinidad and Tobago Attorney General John Jeremie to do all that is necessary to ensure that a license is issued forthwith to the Hindu organization. The State was also ordered to pay SDMS's legal costs in all the courts.

5. National Award of the Trinity Cross

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs published a list of employees for service awards that included very few Hindus or Indians. In addition, the process itself for award granting is prejudiced. The highest award for public service in Trinidad is titled the “Trinity Cross.”

In a June 2006 comment, Attorney Anand Ramlogan said, “The Trinity Cross was perceived as a manifestation or symptom of what was, in substance if not form, a Christian state that tolerated non-Christians. It was a powerful psychological reminder of the fact that we were merely ‘tolerated.’ The objection was not purely religious; it had a political and psychological dimension. It had to do with the sense of belonging and being able to identify with the newly adopted motherland far away from India.”

Justice Peter Jamadar, in reference to the court case brought forth by Maha Sabha and an Islamic group against the State regarding the Cross, stated “This general prohibition against non-discrimination thus prohibits laws that differentiate between people on the basis of their inherent personal characteristics and attributes. Such discrimination undermines the dignity of persons, severely fractures peace and erodes freedom. Courts will not readily allow laws to stand, which have the effect of discriminating on the basis of the stated personal characteristics.”^{ccclxxii} Unfortunately, no action has yet been taken on the removal of the title “Trinity Cross.”

6. Vandalism of Temple by the Sea

On August 5, 2007, the landmark Siewdass Sadhu Shiva Mandir, also known as the Temple-in-the-Sea for its dramatic location just off the coast of the island nation of Trinidad and Tobago, was the site of a break-in, vandalism and attempted arson. The Hindu temple is internationally renowned and recognized as the spiritual center for the Hindus that comprise nearly a quarter of the island's population.

The temple administrators reported that the vandals had toppled and smashed *murtis*, or the representations, of four Hindu deities — Lord Ganesha, Lord Krishna, Goddess Durga and Lord Hanuman – and had used rocks to smash the glass window panes of the temple. They had also attempted to burn down the structure by setting fire next to the southern wall inside the temple.

7. Visit of Benny Hinn

The return visit of a controversial Pentecostal preacher prompted Sat Maharaj, head of the Hindu community on April 16, 2006, to demand that he be barred from coming or arrested upon arrival under the Summary Offenses Act for derogatory remarks about Hinduism made on his first visit. However, the Pentecostal preacher came and preached without incident.

Violations of Constitution and UN Covenants

Trinidad and Tobago signed the UN's International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination on June 7, 1967 and ratified it on October 4, 1973. Its accession to the UN's International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights took place on December 21, 1978.

Trinidad is a democratic state that “acknowledges[s] the supremacy of God [and] faith in fundamental human rights and freedoms.” Chapter 1 of the Constitution^{ccclxxiii} recognizes an individual's right to “equality before the law” and freedom of religion, thought, and expression. It also guarantees the “freedom of the press” although it does not expand upon what this freedom entails. Furthermore, the Constitution states that Parliament may not “deprive a person of the right to a fair hearing” nor deprive a person of the right “to be presumed innocent until proved guilty according to law.”

Conclusion and Recommendations

Rampant harassment and abuse of the Indian and Hindu population is evident. This discrimination is on ethnic and religious grounds, and constitutes both an infraction of the country's Constitution as well as U.N. covenants. Pressure from the international community should be brought to bear upon the government to enforce civil and criminal laws and to protect the Indian/Hindu, in addition to all citizens.

Trinidadian leaders should discourage racial and religious stereotypes and hate speech, recognize Hindus and Indians as equal partners in the rule and governance of the nation, and distance themselves from Christian fundamentalists promoting hatred against Hindus and Hinduism, and Christianization of the government.

Appendix A

International Acts, Conventions, Covenants and Declarations

Bangladesh Enemy Property Act/Vested Property Act

In 1965, after the Indo-Pakistan War, the then Pakistan Government introduced the Enemy Property (Custody and Registration) Order II of 1965. The Defence of Pakistan Rules identified the minority Hindus as enemies and dispossessed them of their properties. After independence from Pakistan, the President of Bangladesh, in Order No. 29 of 1972, changed the nomenclature of the law from the Enemy Properties Act (EPA) to the Vested Property Act (VPA). Clause 2 of the Order further stated: “Nothing contained in this Order shall be called in [to] question in any court”. The Order of the President was subsequently not subject to judicial review.

According to the Association for Land Reform and Development (ALRD), an NGO based in Dhaka, the estimated total Hindu households affected has been 1,048,390, and the estimated area of dispossessed land has totaled 1.05 million acres. About 30% -- 10 out of every 34 -- of the Hindu households (including those that are categorized as missing households) have been the victims of EPA\VPA. These estimates, although based on some debatable assumptions, should be considered as sufficiently indicative of the gravity of the law’s impact.”^{ccclxxiv}

Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT) Peace Accord of 1997

Chittagong Hills Tract is in southeast Bangladesh and is the homeland to the Jumma peoples, 14 tribes of Sino-Tibetan origin. As their language, religion, social system, and economic practices differed from those of the majority of Bangladesh’s population, the Jumma peoples became victims of ethnic discrimination, forced relocation, land eviction, rape, torture, and judicial executions. The CHT peace accord was an effort to ease the struggle between the Jumma peoples and the government of Bangladesh.^{ccclxxv}

United Nations International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination

On December 21, 1965, the United Nations adopted the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination. The fundamental of the Convention are as follows:

Part I

- Defines “racial discrimination” as “any distinction, exclusion, restriction or preference based on race, color, descent, or national or ethnic origin”
- Condemns racial discrimination and segregation
- Promotes the right to equal justice and protection by the law, marriage and choice of spouse, own property, education and freedom of religion, opinion, and thought

Part II

- Establish a Committee on Elimination of Racial Discrimination
- Report annually to the General Assembly on its activities and provide recommendations

Part III

- Open for signature by any State Member of the UN

The full text of the Convention can be found at:

http://www.unhchr.ch/html/menu3/b/d_icerd.htm

United Nations International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights

On December 16, 1966, the United Nations adopted the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. The fundamentals of the Covenant are as follows:

- Every human being has the right to life that shall be protected by law
- No one shall be subjected to torture or inhuman treatment
- Slavery and slave trade shall be prohibited
- Everyone has the right to liberty and security
- Everyone shall be free to leave any country, including his own
- Everyone will be equal in front of the law
- Everyone shall have the right to freedom of thought, conscience, and religion

- No marriage shall be entered into without the free and full consent of the intending spouses
- There shall be an established Human Rights Committee

The full text of the Covenant can be found at:
http://www.unhchr.ch/html/menu3/b/a_ccpr.htm.

United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights

On December 10, 1948, the United Nations adopted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The fundamentals of the Declaration are as follows:

- All humans are born free and equal in dignity and rights and have the right to life, liberty and security
- Slavery and slave trade shall be prohibited
- All humans are equal before the law and entitled to equal protection by the law
- Everyone has the right to own property
- Everyone has the right to freedom of religion, including the right to change religions
- Everyone has the right to work and the right to equal pay for work
- Everyone has the right to education

Following this act, the UN called upon all Member countries to publicize the text of the Declaration and "to cause it to be disseminated, displayed, read and expounded principally in schools and other educational institutions, without distinction based on the political status of countries or territories."

The full text of the Declaration can be found at:
<http://www.un.org/Overview/rights.html>

Appendix B

Attacks on Hindus in Bangladesh from January 1, 2007 to June 30, 2007

	Incident Location	January Human Rights Abuse	Source
1.	Chandranath DhamUpazilla - SitakundaDistrict- Chittagong.	Attack/Looting: About 50 devotees were attacked by 15 - 20 armed men at Chandranath and Ecopark. They looted many valuables, and several people were seriously injured in this attack.	Samakal 01/04/07 BHBCOP
2.	Raj BanabiharDistrict - Rangamati.	Murder: Bodimitra Bhikku (35) of the famous Rangamati Banbirar of the Buddhist Community was brutally killed.	Ajker Kagoj 01/04/07
3.	Village - NaldiUpazilla - LohagaraDistrict - Narail.	Murder: Tarun Biswas, son of Gour Chandra Biswas, and a student of Naldi school was brutally killed.	Samakal 01/04/07 BHBCOP
4.	Gabtali Bas StandMirpur, Dhaka.	Gang-rape: A Tribal woman (23) was gang raped to death by several attackers. Police recovered her body.	Bhorer Kagoj 01/06/07
5.	Village - North BanishantaUpazilla - DakopeDistrict - Khulna.	Attack/Kidnapping: A Hindu family was attacked by a group of armed men. 3 Hindus were seriously injured in this attack, and admitted to the hospital. Later, one of them was kidnapped from the hospital by the same attackers.	Janakantha 01/06/07
6.	Village - GolachariUpazilla - BagaichariDistrict - Rangamati.	Kidnapping: Regional leader and adviser of Jana Sanghati Samity named Snack Kumer Chakma (60) was kidnapped by armed men from his home.	Daily Star 01/07/07 BHBCOP
7.	nya BazarUpazilla gaon District ensingh	Looting: Sontosh Shilpalaya of Paritosh Banik was looted by a group of men, who looted several valuables worth Taka 12 lakhs.	Ajker Kagoj 01/08/07

8.	Shreang BazarUpazilla - LaksamDistrict - Comilla.	Murder: 3 men including a businessman named Uttam Kumer Debnath (25) and his brother Parikkit Debnath (12) were brutally killed.	Pratam Alo 01/08/07 BHBCOP
9.	Village - AmuyirUpazilla - SadarDistrict - Dinajpur.	Attack/Looting/Arson: 50 Hindu houses were attacked, looted and set on fire by 100-armed miscreants. Himu Bala (42), Shankul (45), Gobinda, Banabala, Subal and Shampa Rani were seriously injured in this attack.	Janakantha 01/09/07 BHBCOP
10.	Village - Char AgustiUpazilla - GalachipaDistrict- Patuakhali.	Attack/Looting/Gang-rape: About 200 Hindu families were attacked and looted by a group of Muslims led by Moslem Gazi (55). Several Hindu women were gang raped, and many of the Hindus fled their homes to save their lives.	Janakantha 01/09/07
11.	Village - GaberUpazilla - MadarganjDistrict - Jamalpur.	Gang-rape: Sima Ghose (20), wife of Bimal Ghose was gang raped by a group of Muslims led by Obaidullah. Later she committed suicide by hanging herself.	Janakantha 01/09/07
12.	Village - MukundagatiUpazilla - BelkuchiDistrict - Sirajganj.	Murder/Looting: Biplab Kumer Karmaker (20), son of Binoy Kumer Karmaker, a gold businessman was brutally killed by a group of men, who also looted a Motorcycle, Mobile Phone and gold ornaments from Biplab.	Juganthar 01/10/07 BHBCOP
13.	Village- NekbaktaUpazilla - JaldhakaDistrict - Nilphamari.	Acid Attack: Kalpana Rani, wife of Sudhin Chandra Baisha was seriously injured in an acid attack by several attackers led by Rowshan Ali, Maminul Islam Manju and his brother Mahabubul Islam Bablu. They threatened Kalpana's family to leave the country.	Ajker Kagoj 01/10/07
14.	Upazilla - SharankholaDistrict - Bagerhat.	Attack/Looting: The house of Anup Kumer was attacked by 7 to 8 miscreants. They looted many valuable things including gold ornaments. Rita Rani (40) and her son Kishore Kumer were seriously injured in the attack.	Sangbad 01/12/07
15.	Village - ArambagUpazilla - SadarDistrict - Barguna.	Land-Grab/Attack: The house of Haren Pramanik was attacked by armed miscreants led by Shahadat Hossain, Ex-Chairman, Upazilla sadar in an attempt to occupy his house. Maharani (40), daughter of Haren Pramanik, and daughters-in-law Bijali (35) and Dipali Rani (40) were seriously injured in the attack.	Sangbad 01/12/07

16.	Village - Padmagram District - Barguna.	Land-Grab/Attack/Looting/Arson: The house of Narayan Chandra Shil was attacked, set on fire and looted by a group of Muslims led by Abdul Hakim in an attempt to occupy his house and land. Temple, Images of God and Goddess were also destroyed in the attack.	Juganthar 01/12/07
17.	Village - North Jhunagach Poni District - Nilphamari.	Murder: Subal Chandra Roy, son of Sudhir Chandra Roy was brutally killed by a group of attackers. Police recovered his body from Sonakhuli Switch Gate.	Sangbad 01/13/07
18.	Upazilla - Ramgard District - Khagrachari.	Attack/Arson: Several homes belonging to the Tribal community were attacked and set on fire by a group of men led by the Nuru Commissioner in an attempt to occupy the homes. Baren Bikash Chakma, Sona Chakma, Kamala Debi Chakma, Sumitra Debi Chakma, and Basu Chakma were seriously injured in the attack.	Ajker Kagoj 01/13/07 BHBCOP
19.	Village - Bjoypur Upazilla - Atpara District - Netrokona.	Land-Grab: The house and land-property of Parimal Datta were occupied by a group of Muslims led by Sanu Mia, Joynal Mia and Babul Mia. They threatened to kill the family members of Parimal and to leave the country.	Ittafaq 01/13/07
20.	Village - Sufalakati Upazilla - Keshebpur District - Jessore.	Kidnapping: Kingkar (14), son of Ananda Aich and a student of Sufalakati school was kidnapped by 4 to 5 miscreants.	Janakantha 01/14/07 BHBCOP
21.	Village - Barabalia Upazilla - Sadar District - Thakurgaon.	Murder: Nungli Tudu (65), a Tribal woman, was brutally killed by a group of men. Police recovered her body from a pond.	Bhorer Kagoj 01/15/07
22.	Village - Barabak Upazilla - Chitalmari District - Bagerhat.	Attack/Land-Grab: The houses of Amulya Mahantha (65) and his younger brother Anadi Mahantha (35) were attacked by 10 to 12 Muslims led by Hamid Fakir, Mahid Fakir, Shah Alam Fakir and Alam Fakir. The miscreants occupied the Shrimp cultivation owned by Amulya and Anadi. Amulya Mahantha, his wife Baby Mahantha, and Anadi Mahantha were seriously injured in this attack.	Ittafaq 01/15/07 BHBCOP
23.	Upazilla - Kasba District - Bhrammanbaria.	Attack on Temple: Kuthi Jagarnnath temple was attacked by the fundamentalists led by Bachir Mia. Bishwamangal Harinam Sankirtan was foiled by them. Nitu Chandra Saha (40) was seriously injured in this attack.	Bhorer Kagoj 01/16/07

24.	Village - NayapukurUpazilla - DupchanciaDistrict- Bagura.	Murder: Nirmal Chandra Das (30), son of Nimai Chandra Das was brutally killed by a group of men. Police recovered his body.	Juganthar 01/16/07
25.	TardeshiparaDistrict - Gazipur.	Attack/Looting: The house of Mukul Kumer Mallik, Gazipur District representative of the Daily Sangbad was attacked and looted by a group of miscreants.	Sangbad 01/16/07 BHBCOP
26.	CheloparaUpazilla - SadarDistrict - Bagura.	Attack/Looting: Pradip Kumer Das (20), son of Bijendra Nath Das was attacked by armed miscreants. They looted several valuables worth Taka 150,000. In the attack, businessman Jagadish Chandra was also seriously injured.	Inqilab 01/17/07 BHBCOP
27.	Village - BaraiparaUpazilla - DighaliaDistrict - Khulna.	Attack/Looting: The house of Naresh Chandra Das was attacked by 8 to 9 armed miscreants. They looted many valuables including gold ornaments. Naresh Das (55), his wife Ila Rani Das (50) and daughter-in-law Dinata Rani Das were seriously injured in the attack.	Ittafaq 01/17/07
28.	Village - DaibaghahatiUpazilla - MorelgonjDistrict - Bagerhat.	Land-Grab/Attack: The house and land-property of Madhabi Rani, wife of late Binode Bihari Shil was attacked by a powerful Muslim man named Muhuri Nazrul Islam Dakuya. Nazrul is trying to occupy her land-property, and threatened to kill Madhabi and her family members.	Ajker Kagoj 01/17/07 BHBCOP
29.	Village - ManatiUpazilla - GouripurDistrict - Mymensingh	Attack/Looting: A Hindu house was attacked and looted by armed miscreants. Jhoshna Rani Debnath and Dilip Debnath were seriously injured in the attack.	Ajker Kagoj 01/18/07
30.	Upazilla - KompanigonjDistrict - Noakhali.	Attack/Looting: The house of Daneshwar Master of Char Hazari Union Council was attacked and looted by 15 to 20 miscreants. 3 Hindus including Daneshwar Master were seriously injured in the attack.	Ajker Kagoj 01/19/07
31.	Village - HazipurUpazilla - SadarDistrict - Narsinghdi.	Attack/Looting: The houses of Kalipada Saha, Subhash Ghose, Dr. Bidhubhusan Saha, Amit Saha and Kanai Lal Saha were attacked and looted by a number of men. Rani Saha (36), Swanya Rani Ghose (40), Sanjit (16), Pinky (9) and 5 other Hindus were seriously injured in the attack..	Ajker Kagoj 01/20/07
32.	Village - NaliUpazilla -	Attack/Looting: The house of Milu Saha was attacked and looted by armed	Sangbad

	ShibalayaDistrict - Manikgonj.	men. Two Hindus including Dipak Saha were seriously injured in the attack.	01/20/07 BHBCOP
33.	Kalir BazarUpazilla - SadarDistrict - Madaripur.	Attack/Looting: A Hindu owner of a jewelry store, 'Lokhnath Jewelry,' was attacked by 10 to 15 miscreants. They looted large amount of gold ornaments.	Sangbad 01/21/07
34.	M. C. CollegeSylhet.	Worship Site Attacked: A Puja Mandap of Goddess Sarswati was broken down by the Chatradal (Muslim organization) activists. Several laborers were seriously injured in this attack.	Janakantha 01/23/07 BHBCOP
35.	Karamatnagar Tea GardenUpazilla - Baralekha Mowlabibazar.	Attack/Arson: The house of Nikhil Fulmali, Nakul Fulmali, Lalit Fulmali and Khudiram Fulmali was attacked and set on fire.	Ittafaq 01/22/07 BHBCOP
36.	Upazilla - DurgapurDistrict - Rajshahi.	Attack/Threat: The Hindu communities in Tegoria, Gunaj Para and Anduya villages were attacked by a group of Muslims led by Ex-Union Council Member Akbar Ali. They threatened to kill the Hindu community. Gopal Chandra Saha (34) and Madhusudan Mantu were seriously injured in the attack.	Janakantha 01/24/07
37.	Amir Khan MahallahUpazilla - BaniachangDistrict - Hobigonj.	Temple Attack/Looting: Goddess Kali Hindu temple of Baniachang Sadar was attacked and looted.	Ajker Kagoj 01/24/07
38.	Upazilla - LamaDistrict - Bandarban.	Land-Grab: About 1500 Bighas of land of the Tribal Mro and Marma community was occupied by Md. Gani, Abdul Jabbar and Dalda Company. The group led by Union Parishad Chairman Moyazem Hossain and Kamaluddin, with the help of the local administration, are trying to occupy land belonging to the tribals.	Sangbad 01/25/07 BHBCOP
39.	Palbari BazarUpazilla - NiyamatpurDistrict - Nougaoon.	Attack/Looting: Mahabilash Shop, Shop of Sanchay, gold shop of Sujit Howlader and shop of Prafullah were attacked and looted by 20 to 25 armed miscreants.	Inqilab 01/25/07

40.	ShajadpurUpazilla - MelandahaDistrict - Jamalpur.	Murder/Looting: Samar Kumer Saha, son of Gour Chandra Saha, President of Melandaha Upazilla communist Party was brutally killed . The attackers also looted a Bi-cycle and Mobile phone from Samar. Police later recovered his body.	BhorerKagoj 01/25/07 BHBCOP
41.	Village - PuthimariUpazilla - BatiagathaDistrict - Khulna.	Acid Attack: Anita Dhali (16), daughter of late Sitaram Dhali was seriously injured in an acid attack by 4 to 5 Muslim men.	Juganthar 01/27/07 BHBCOP
42.	District - Bagura.	Temple Property Occupied: About 1500 Bighas of Pirgacha Kali temple, Shree Shree Maa Bhabani Bighrah temple property belonging to the Hindu community was occupied by BNP members and its front organizations, and a Jatiya Party office was built there.	Juganthar 01/27/07 BHBCOP
43.	Village - ChandpurUpazilla - SenbagDistrict - Noakhali.	Festival Attack: Lard Jagannath festival at the house of Ranjit Master was attacked by a group of Muslims led by Rubel, Babar, Fakil and Mainuddin. Laxmi Rani Das (45), Narayan Das (42), Ratan Das (40), Nimai Das and other Hindus were seriously injured in the attack.	Janakantha 01/28/07
44.	District - Gopalganj.	Temple Attack/Looting: Images of Lord Shiblinga of the Loknath temple were looted.	Sangbad 01/28/07 BHBCOP
45.	Village - ChandanpatUpazilla - AditmariDistrict - Lalmanirhat.	Kidnapping/Attack: A teenage Hindu girl (13) was kidnapped by armed miscreants led by Zillur Rahman, Abdus Salam, Jamaluddin, Fazlu Mia and Jhantu. The attackers threatened to kill her father, and he was seriously injured in the attack.	Sangbad01/29/07 BHBCOP
46.	Manggang ParaUpazilla - ThanchiDistrict - Bandarban.	Murder/Kidnapping: 3 Tribal men including Paicha Aung Marma (36) and Paichasing Marma (34) were kidnapped and brutally killed by a group of armed men.	Juganthar 01/29/07 BHBCOP
47.	Village - NaluyaUpazilla - MonohardiDistrict - Norsingdi.	Murder: Malina Rani Das (45) was brutally killed by unknown miscreants.	Ittafaq 01/30/07

			BHBCOP
48.	Gosail DangaChittagong City.	Religious Site Attacked: Lokhnath Dham of Gosail Danga was attacked by 10 to 15 men led by Ashraf, Officer, Ispahani Real Estate. Four Hindus were seriously injured in the attack.	BhorerKago j01/30/07 BHBCOP
49.	Village - ChauchaUpazilla - MuksudpurDistrict - Gopalganj.	Murder/Kidnapping: Dhuba Biswas (25) was kidnapped and brutally murdered by a group of men led by Siraj Molla. Police later recovered his body.	BHBCOP
50.	Village - MirzagonjUpazilla - DomarDistrict - Nilphamari.	Murder/Kidnapping: Prafulla Kumer was kidnapped and brutally killed by his abductors. Police later recovered his body.	BHBCOP

	Incident Location	February Human Rights Abuse	Source
1.	Karakhali Bazar Upazilla - Dighinala District - Khagrachari.	Murder: Chandrakiran Chakma, a member of J. S. S of Hill District, was brutally murdered.	Ittafaq 02/01/07 BHBCOP
2.	Village - Poyail Upazilla - Boalmari District - Faridpur.	Attack/Looting: The house of Ranjit was attacked and looted by a group of men led by Jahangir Sheik, son of Jalil Matubbar, a BNP leader. Seven Hindus were seriously injured in the attack.	Janakantha 02/03/07
3.	Hotel Panama Upazilla - Sadar District - Patuakhali.	Murder: Rajan Karmaker (25) was brutally killed at Hotel Panama.	Juganthar 02/03/07 BHBCOP
4.	Megna River Upazilla - Mehendiganj District - Barishal.	Murder/ Kidnapping: Sushil (47), a member of Hindu community, was kidnapped and brutally killed by his abductors.	Juganthar 02/03/07

5.	Village - Dhopakhal Upazilla - Sadar District - Bagerhat.	Attack/Looting: Hindu community of Dhapakhal was attacked by BNP activists. They looted many valuable things. Subash Chakrabarty, Niranjana Chakrabarty, Deb Karmaker, Arabindu Kabiraj and Joydeb Chakrabarty fled their homes in order to save their lives.	Janakantha 02/03/07 BHBCOP
6.	Village - Fazilpur Upazilla - Mahadebpur District - Nogaon.	Attack/Looting: The house of Naresh Chandra Mondal was attacked and looted by 10 to 15 Muslims led by Dulal, Mecher, Ainal and Abed Ali. In the attack, Naresh's family members were seriously injured. Later they looted Naresh's pond and fish worth Taka about 30,000.	Janakantha 02/04/07
7.	South Baishari Upazilla - Naikkangchari District - Bandarban.	Kidnapping: A young Tribal girl was kidnapped by Md. Putul, Md. Hossain, Badira, and Mostafa.	Sangbad 02/07/07 BHBCOP
8.	Village - Shaldia Upazilla - Khaliyazuri District - Netrokona.	Land-Grab/ Threat: Salek Mia, Harich Mia, Nawab Mia, Aynal Haq and Abed Ali are trying to occupy the homes of 3 Hindus, Nikhil Roy, Haridas Roy and Jatindra Mohan Roy. They threatened to kill the members of the three Hindu families, and threatened them to leave the country.	Ittafaq 02/07/07 BHBCOP
9.	Village - Jagannathpur Upazilla - Badalgachi District - Nogaon.	Rape: A Tribal woman (35) was raped by a man, named Bazlur Rahman.	Sangbad 02/07/07
10.	Village - Induhati Upazilla - Muksudpur District - Gopalganj.	Murder: Gour Biswas (20) was brutally killed.	Samakal 02/08/07
11.	Village - Kaligati Upazilla - Chitalmari District - Bagerhat.	Attack/Looting: Many Hindu homes including the house of Krishna Brammah were attacked by a group of men demanding money.	Ittafaq 02/09/07 BHBCOP
12.	Village - Roycho Upazilla - Sadar District - Comilla.	Land-Grab: About 60 Bighas of land and the house of Paresh Roy Chowdhury were occupied by a powerful local land-grabber named Emdadul Haq Jharu. Paresh fled his home in order to save his life.	Ittafaq 02/10/07
13.	Village - Birat Upazilla - Nalchiti District - Jhalakathi.	Land-Grab: The house and land owned by Mihir Datta was occupied by a group of men.	Bhorerkagoj 02/11/07 BHBCOP

14.	P.S - Kotowali Dhaka City.	Land-Grab: Shikder Construction Co. is trying to occupy the land-property of the Raja Rammohan Roy library.	Ajker Kagoj 02/11/07
15.	Village - Goyeshpur Upazilla - Nandail District - Mymensingh.	Worship Site Attacked: 3 Images at a Puja Mandap (worship site) were destroyed by Muslim fundamentalists.	Ajker Kagoj 02/11/07 BHBCOP
16.	P. S. - Shympur Dhaka City.	Temple Property Occupied: The property of the 364 year-old Akhra and Temple named Shree Shree Ramkrishna Giridhari was occupied by Lablu Shah and Abdur Rahman. The illegal occupiers then built two factories on the temple land.	Ajker Kagoj 02/12/07
17.	Village - Raghunathpur Upazilla - Ghoraghat District - Dinajpur.	Land-Grab/Attack/Looting: 13 Tribal homes were attacked and looted by a group of land-grabbers. Eight tribals were seriously injured in the attack. The homes were attacked in order to illegally occupy Tribal land.	Sangbad 02/13/07 BHBCOP
18.	Sahapara Upazilla - Sadar District - Tangail.	Attack/Looting: The house of Dulal Saha, a businessman, was attacked and several valuables were looted including gold ornaments. Five Hindus including a woman were seriously injured in the attack.	Janakantha 02/17/07
19.	Village - Kaminibasia Upazilla - Dakope District - Khulna.	Murder: Chittaranjan Roy (45) was brutally murdered.	Ittafaq 02/17/07 BHBCOP
20.	Village - Kamalla Upazilla - Muradnagar District - Comilla.	Temple Property Occupied: The property of the 100 years old Shree Shree Kalimata Temple was occupied by Chowdhury Rafibul Haq Shipan, President, Upazilla Chatra Dal (Muslim organization). He built a market there.	Pratom Alo 02/17/07 BHBCOP
21.	Dalgram Upazilla - Kaliganj District - Lalmonirhat.	Land-Grab: A group of Muslims led by Jalil are trying to occupy the houses and land of Adhir Chandra and Dulal. The two Hindu men fled their homes.	Sangbad 02/20/07
22.	Badullah Para Upazilla - Mirsarai District - Chittagong.	Attack/Looting: Fishermen of Hindu community were attacked and looted by 8 to 10 miscreants led by Nur Hossain, Bablu and Khalil. Suresh Jaladash (35), Manik Jaladash (40), Jagannath Jaladash (23), Sukumer (40), Dinesh (30) and Sudarshan (50) were seriously injured in the attack.	Bhorerkagoj 02/20/07
23.	Village - Gobindapur Upazilla - Sadar	Land-Grab: 15 Bighas of land owned by Shachin Mohan Deb was occupied by 12 Muslim men. The family members of Shachin Mohan Deb fled their	Sangbad

	District - Jamalpur.	home to save their lives.	02/22/07
24.	Upazilla - Debidhwar District - Comilla.	Attack/Looting/Temple Attack: After the 2001 General Election, a number of Muslim men led by Manjurul Ahasan Munshi M.P attacked and looted the houses of Hindu community. Many temples, Images of Goddess and God were destroyed. Many Hindus left their houses in order to save their lives.	Sangbad 02/16/07 BHBCOP
25.	Heat Bangladesh Upazilla - Dakope District - Khulna.	Murder/Attack/Looting: 'Heat Bangladesh' was attacked and looted and Shital Kumer Sarker was brutally killed by the attackers.	Sangbad 02/21/07
26.	Village - Kutubkathi Upazilla - Sadar District - Jhalkathi.	Attack/Looting: The house of Rabindra Nath Mondal was attacked by 10 to 12 armed men. They looted several valuables, including gold ornaments worth Taka about 2 Lakh. Rabindra Nath's son, Birendra Nath Mondal, was seriously injured in the attack.	Sangbad 02/21/07
27.	Village - Simultala Upazilla - Kamalganj District - Moulabibazar.	Attack/Looting: The house of Suryakantha Singh was attacked and looted. Suryakantha's brother, Prafulla Kumer Singh, was seriously injured in the attack.	Daily Star 02/24/07
28.	Village - Sarmushia Upazilla - Atpara District - Netrokona.	Land-Grab: The land of Madan Gopal was occupied by BNP party activists Nazimuddin, Akdil Mia, Islamuddin, Hashimuddin, Sabuj Mia, Faju Mia, Shantu Mia and Abdul Aziz. Madan Gopal fled his home in order to save his life.	Samakal 02/23/07 BHBCOP
29.	Village - Kaligati Upazilla - Chitalmari District - Bagerhat.	Rape: Tamalika Mondal, the daughter of Monoranjana Mondal and a schoolgirl was raped by Nur Islam Sheik (30).	Inqilab 02/25/07
30.	Village - Lawjana Upazilla - Sadar District - Tangail.	Temple Property Occupied/Threat: A portion of the property of the traditional Chilabari Battala Kali temple was occupied by Joynal Abedin, Toyajuddin and Sanar Master, with the assistance of local government authorities. They then built a Minar on the temple property, and threatened to kill the Hindu community.	Sangbad 02/15/07 BHBCOP
31.	Village - Chapaid Upazilla - Madhupur District - Tangail.	Land-Grab/Eviction: The Forest Department is trying to evict 158 Tribal Coch families.	Sangbad 02/25/07

32.	Village - Sebakdas Upazilla - Kaliganj District - Lalmonirhat.	Kidnapping/Threat: A Christian woman (21) was kidnapped by 7 to 8 miscreants led by Raichuddin, Hashem Ali and Hossain Kari. They threatened to kill the Christian woman's family members.	Pratom Alo 02/25/07
33.	Patrakala tea Garden Upazilla - Kamalganj District - Moulabibazar.	Kidnapping: A Tribal teenage girl, student of Bhandarigoan High School was kidnapped by a Muslim man named Parvez.	Pratom Alo 02/25/07
34.	District - Bagura.	Land-Grab: Bogura Poursava is trying to occupy the Satanibari, a 200 year-old Jaminder Bari.	BHBCOP
35.	Upazilla - Chowdhagram District - Comilla.	Land-Grab: The 150 year-old Gobinda Manikya Dighi was occupied by land-grabbers.	BHBCOP
36.	Village - Shympur Upazilla - Sirajdikhan District - Munshigonj.	Gang-Rape: The daughter of Dulal Chandra Talukder and a student in class viii was gang raped. Dulal Chandra later committed suicide by hanging himself.	Ittafaq 02/26/07

	Incident Location	March Human Rights Abuse	Source
1.	Shym Nagar Upazilla - Sadar District - Sylhet.	Temple Property Occupied: Temple owned property was occupied by a powerful Muslim named Ariful Haq Chowdhury.	Protam Alo 03/01/07 BHBCOP
2.	Green Tower Hotel, Magbazar Dhaka City.	Murder: Kanchan Sen, a lawyer's assistant, was brutally killed by two men.	Protam Alo 03/01/07
3.	Dublarchar Upazilla - Sharankhala District - Bagerhat.	Murder: Sheta Sarker (48) was brutally killed by a group of men led by Kamaluddin, Vice-President, Dublarchar Fishermen Group.	Sangbad 03/02/07 BHBCOP

4.	Village - Baglagram Upazilla - Sadar District - Netrokona.	Crematorium Ground Occupied/Threat: A 100 year-old crematorium ground was occupied by two Muslims, Shahajahan Chand Mia and Nuru Mia. The illegal occupiers threatened to kill the Hindu community.	Ajker Kagoj 03/02/07
5.	Village - Shovarampur Upazilla - Sadar District - Faridpur.	Temple Property Occupied: About 4 Bighas of property belonging to the Jagarnnath Bighra temple was occupied by a man named Halim Sheik.	Samakal 03/05/07
6.	Village - Harishpur Upazilla - Tanore District - Rajshahi.	Attack/Attempted Rape: A man named Sohorab Ali tried to rape a tribal woman.	Ajker Kagoj 03/04/07 BHBCOP
7.	North Betdova Upazilla - Kalihati District - Tangail.	Attack: Kartik Chanda Pal, an assistant teacher at Fatema Halima High School, was attacked and seriously injured by a group of Muslims led by Yahad Ali.	Ajker Kagoj 03/04/07
8.	Village - Mocharkhala Upazilla - Ukkiya District - Cox-s-Bazar.	Attack: The house of Kuching Chakma was attacked, and several Tribals were seriously injured in the attack, including Kuching Chakma (44), Ya Sang Chakma (22) and Unchi Chakma (18).	Ajker Kagoj 03/06/07 BHBCOP
9.	F.D.C Gate P.S - Tejgaon Dhaka City.	Land-Grab: About 30 Bighas of land owned by Patrik Gomez was occupied by a group of miscreants led by Kutubuddin.	Ajker Kagoj 03/06/07 BHBCOP
10.	Village - Ranigaon Upazilla - Atpara District - Netrokona.	Murder: Purnima (7), a student of Class I and the daughter of Bikash Das, was brutally murdered.	Samakal 03/08/07
11.	Village - Aruyail Upazilla - Sarayil Brammanbaria.	Temple Attack: 7 images of God and Goddess at a 300 year-old temple were destroyed by Muslim fundamentalists.	Samakal 03/09/07
12.	Village - Shorsak Upazilla - Shaharashti District - Chandpur.	Attack/Looting/Gang-Rape: The house of Manu Bakshi was attacked and looted by a group of armed men led by Yasin Patowari. A housewife named Alpana Bakshi was also gang raped by the attackers.	Ajker Kagoj 03/09/07
13.	Village - Ganeshtaki Upazilla - Shwarupkathi District - Pirojpur.	Gang-Rape: A teenage girl (14), and the daughter of Sharan Mondal was gang raped by Mamun (25) and Abdul Mannan.	Ajker Kagoj 03/09/07

14.	Teliapara Upazilla - Madhabpur District - Habiganj.	Attack/Threat: Hiresh Bhattachaya, representative of the Daily 'Khoyai,' was attacked by a group of men, and seriously injured. The attackers also threatened to kill Hiresh.	Sangbad 03/11/07 BHBCOP
15.	Upazilla - Rajapur District - Jhalkhati.	Land-Grab: The land of Dinesh (55) and Pankaj (48) was occupied by Abul Kalam Azad, the General Secretary of the BNP in Rajapur Upazilla.	Protam Alo 03/11/07
16.	Baiyannapukur Upazilla - Raozan District - Chittagong.	Temple Property Occupied: Temple land of Gouranga Ashram was occupied by a powerful Muslim man named Golam Rabbani.	Ajker Kagoj 03/12/07
17.	District - Gaibanda.	Attack/Threat: Swapna Rani Das and her son Shreekrishna Das were attacked by Md. Rafiqul Islam. The attackers also threatened to kill Swapna's family members.	Ittfaq 03/13/07 BHBCOP
18.	Village - Tatultala Upazilla - Badaigram District - Natore.	Attack/Looting: The homes of Dharendra Nath Sarker, Shree Charan and Sudip Kumer were attacked and looted by 10 to 15 armed men. Several Hindus were seriously injured in the attack.	Juganthar 03/15/07 BHBCOP
19.	Village - Arjinogaon Upazilla - Sadar District - Nougao.	Land-Grab/Threat: Several men led by Abdus Samad Lakandar are trying to occupy the land/property of Niprenda Nath Ghose, Kamini Ghose, Ratan Kumer Ghose and Bishwanath Ghose. The attackers also threatened to kill them.	Janakantha 03/15/07 BHBCOP
20.	Village - Mirja Nagar Upazilla - Keshabpur District - Jessore.	Attack/Looting: The house of Ananda, Dilip, Kartik and Tarak Datta was attacked and looted by a group of miscreants.	Protam Alo 03/16/07
21.	Village - Modakpara Upazilla - Baxiganj District - Jamalpur.	Attack/Looting: The house of Jiban Modak was attacked and looted by armed men. Five Hindus, including Jiban Modak, were seriously injured in the attack.	Protam Alo 03/16/07
22.	Village - Subanyatali Bathuli, Delduar District - Tangail.	Attack/Looting: The house of Pankaj Kumar Sarker was attacked by 10 to 12 armed miscreants. Several valuables were looted, including gold ornaments.	Protam Alo 03/16/07
23.	Village - Baghgola Upazilla - Mirsarai District - Chittagong.	Attack/Looting: The house of Manindra Kumar Master was attacked and looted by 15 to 16 miscreants. Hindus of the family were seriously injured in the attack.	Protam Alo 03/16/07 BHBCOP

24.	Village - Swarmusia Upazilla - Atpara District - Netrokona.	Torture: Keshari Ranjan Sarker a leader of Netrokon district Puja Udjapan Parishad, a Hindu organization, was tortured by Zialul Haq., the O. C of Atpara upazilla.	Ajker Kagoj 03/16/07 BHBCOP
25.	Village - Surma Upazilla - Madhabpur District - Habiganj.	Attack/Gang-Rape/Festival Attacked: The house of Jitendra Shil was attacked by a group of Muslims led by Badsha Mia, seriously injuring several Hindu family members. They also attacked a Hindu festival, and young Hindu women were gang raped by the attackers.	Ajker Kagoj 03/17/07
26.	Village - Barabari Upazilla - Sadar District - Rangpur.	Land-Grab: About 70 Bighas of land owned by Anil Chandra Roy, Prafulla Kumar Roy, Dilip Kumar Roy, Bibhuti Kumar Roy and Milan Kumar Roy, were occupied by Tabarak Ali and Ahmed Ali.	Ajker Kagoj 03/17/07 BHBCOP
27.	Dariapur Upazilla - Adamdighi District - Bagura.	Temple Property Occupied: The temple property of Shree Shree Kalibari Temple was occupied by a number of men named Alamgir, who built a house on the land.	Samakal 03/17/07
28.	Village - Kumarpara Upazilla - Parbatipur District - Dinajpur.	Attack/Threat: A Hindu Para was attacked by armed Muslims led by Majibar Rahman and Tahabar Rahman. 9 Hindus were seriously injured, including a 9 year-old. The attackers also threatened to kill the Hindu community. Several Hindus fled their homes in order to save their lives.	Ajker Kagoj 03/18/07
29.	Unasattarpara Upazilla - Rowjan District - Chittagong.	Attack/Looting: The house of Ratna Mahajan, a school teacher was attacked and looted by armed miscreants. Puspa Mahajan (60) and Babul Mahajan (70) were seriously injured in this attack.	Ajker Kagoj 03/18/07
30.	Shanpa Snaks and Restaurants District - Gopalganj.	Murder: Bimal Biswas (28) was brutally killed by Lelin, son of Sabur Molla.	Sangbad 03/20/07
31.	Village - Panchkahania Upazilla - Sadar District - Netrokona.	Kidnapping: Gouranga Chandra Saha, a businessman was kidnapped.	Ittafaq 03/20/07 BHBCOP
32.	Upazilla - Gafargaon District - Mymensingh.	Kidnapping: Jogal Kishore Roy, Headmaster Kandi High School was kidnapped for ransom by a group of Muslims led by BNP leader Abdul Mannan.	Ajker Kagoj 03/20/07
33.	Village - Babulia	Gang-Rape/Kidnapping: A teenage girl and daughter of Hiralal Das was	Daily Star

	Upazilla - Sadar District - Satkhira.	kidnapped and gang raped by a group of Muslims led by Haider Ali, Advocate Azrazul Islam, Imran Hossain and Riazul Islam.	03/21/07 BHBCOP
34.	Upazilla - Madhupur District - Tangail.	Murder: Chalesh Richil, a Tribal leader was brutally killed by a group of Muslims led by Jahirul Haq and Kamrul Muzahid of the Forest Department.	Samakal 03/21/07
35.	Village - Jayantarkathi Upazilla - Gournadi District - Barishal.	Attack/Looting: The house of Narayan Chancre Das was attacked and looted by 10 to 15 armed miscreants. Narayan (28) and his wife Anjana Rani (23) were seriously injured in the attack.	Janakantha 03/22/07
36.	Village - Laxmipur Upazilla - Madhukhali District - Faridpur.	Murder/Kidnapping: Milan Mondal, the son of Ananda Mondal, was kidnapped and brutally killed. Police later recovered his body.	Sangbad 03/21/07 BHBCOP
37.	Village - Badaura Upazilla - Atpara District - Netrokona.	Land-Grab/Threat: Land owned by Madhab Bhattachaya was occupied by a group of Muslims led by Fazal Farim, Bakul Mia and Abdul Kadir. They threatened to kill Madhab	Ittafaq 03/22/07
38.	Village - Rasunili Upazilla - Tarash District - Sirajganj.	Land-Grab/Attack/Threat: The house of Raghunath was attacked and occupied by a group of men led by Ahmed Ali. They threatened to kill the Tribal family members.	Sangbad 03/23/07
39.	Upazilla - Sadar District - Gopalganj.	Looting: Rajmata, a gold shop owned by Tapan Roy and Pravati, and another gold shop owned by Sukdeb Biswas were looted.	Sangbad 03/24/07 BHBCOP
40.	Upazilla - Tarail District - Kishoreganj.	Attack/Looting: The house of Timir Biswas was attacked and looted by a group of men led by Jabbar Mia. Jhuma Biswas was seriously injured in the attack.	Sangbad 03/26/07
41.	Gayalipara Upazilla - Mathbaria District - Pirojpur.	Attack/Looting: The house of Priyanath Gayali was attacked and looted by 15 to 20 armed miscreants led by Anwar Muhuri. 3 Hindus were seriously injured in the attack.	Sangbad 03/26/07 BHBCOP
42.	Village - Moharkona Upazilla - Nikhli District - Kishoreganj.	Land-Grab/Threat: The traditional Dayal Kuthir was occupied by Abdul Khaleque and Litan. The attackers also threatened to kill Mrinal Kanti Saha.	Ittafaq 03/25/07 BHBCOP
43.	Upazilla - Durgapur	Land-Grab: Land owned by Sudarshan Saha, a businessman, was occupied	Juganthar 03/27/07

	District - Netrokona.	by local BNP leaders. They built a BNP office there.	BHBCOP
44.	Village - Noagoan Upazilla - Bajidpur District - Kishoreganj.	Attack on Worship Site: A Hindu Puja Mandap was broken down by Muslim fundamentalists led by Mosaddek Mia (30), Taiyab Ali (34), Kabir Mia (26) and Kachu Mia of Patuli village. Nilesh Das (34), Shymal Das and Utpal Das were seriously injured in the attack.	Protam Alo 03/27/07
45.	Village - Madhya Para Upazilla - Kishoreganj. District - Nilphamari.	Murder: Niva Rani (22) was brutally killed and the police later recovered her body.	Janakantha 03/28/07 BHBCOP
46.	Village - Bishwaserhat Upazilla - Sadar District - Barishal.	Land-Grab/Attack: About 4 Bighas of land owned by Manik Chandra Dey were occupied by Saidur Rahman and Abdur Rashid. 5 Hindus were seriously injured in the attack.	Sangbad 03/28/07 BHBCOP
47.	Upazilla - Trishal District - Mymensingh.	Attack/Looting: The house of Narayan Chandra Karmaker was attacked and looted by 10 to 11 armed men. Ruma Rani Karmaker and Suman Chandra Karmaker were seriously injured in the attack.	Ajker Kagoj 03/30/07 BHBCOP
48.	Upazilla - Sadar District - Sherepur.	Murder: March Babu (30), the son of Nimai Bepari, was brutally killed. Police later recovered his body.	Janakantha 03/31/07 BHBCOP
49.	Sat Matha Upazilla - Sadar District - Bagura.	Land-Grab: Vested property was occupied by BNP activists, who built a district BNP office on the land.	Ajker Kagoj 03/30/07
50.	Village - Harta Upazilla - Ujirpur District - Barishal.	Land-Grab/Threat: Land belonging to the Hindu community was occupied by a group of Muslims led by Jalil Bepari. They also threatened the Hindu community.	BHBCOP

	Incident Location	<p>April</p> <p>Human Rights Abuse</p>	Source
1	Upazilla - Shallah District - Sunamganj	Looting: A 2 Kilogram Image of Ramkrishna of Dumda Akhra was looted.	Samakal 04/01/07 BHBCOP

2	Village -Madhyapara Upazilla - Kaliakair District - Gazipur	Land-Grab/Attack/Looting: Two Hindu homes were attacked and looted; the two homes were subsequently illegally occupied.	Juganthar 04/01/07 BHBCOP
3	Gazpara Upazilla - Panchari Upazilla - Khagrachari	Rape: A young tribal girl (11) was raped by a Muslim man named Abdul Mottaleb.	Pratam Alo 04/01/07
4	Village - Joddharpara Upazilla - Ulipur District - Kurigram.	Attack/Looting: The house of Parimal Majumder, a journalist, was attacked and looted. Several valuables, including gold ornaments worth Taka about 2 Lakh, were stolen from the home.	Pratam Alo 04/02/07 BHBCOP
5	Ukilpara District - Narayanganj.	Land-Grab: The land/property of Ananta Bandhopadya was occupied by Mossaraf Hossain, Chairman, Mogdapara Union Parishad., and built a house on the occupied land.	Samakal 04/04/07
6	Upazilla - Sadar District - Gopalganj.	Kidnapping: Asit Biswas was kidnapped by several miscreants.	Samakal 04/04/07 BHBCOP
7	Chakbazar Mahalla Upazilla - Sadar District - Faridpur.	Kidnapping: Sathi Nath, a student of class XI and daughter of a Freedom Fighter named Ranada Prashad Nath, was kidnapped by Alhaz Fazle Rabbi.	Samakal 04/04/07
8	Village - Sarbari Upazilla - Agailjhara District - Barishal.	Attack/Kidnapping: Dulal Halder (20) was kidnapped by several men, who also tried to kill him. He was seriously injured during the incident.	Sangbad 04/04/07 BHBCOP
9	Village - Tadashi Upazilla - Kotalipara District - Gopalganj.	Attack/Land-Grab: Sudharanjan Bhattachaya (85) was attacked by 6 to 7 armed men, who tried to kill him in order to occupy his land/property.	Samakal 04/06/07
10	P. S- Kotowali Chittagong City.	Threat/Intimidation: Bangladesh Islami Biplobi Command Council threatened to kill Samaresh Baidya, a senior reporter of the Bhorer Kagoj.	Samakal 04/06/07 BHBCOP
11	Khandakia Muslipara Upazilla - Lama District - Bandarban.	Attack/Land-Grab/Looting: The house of Babul Kumar Saha was attacked and looted by several Muslims, who also occupied 12 bighas of land.	Sangbad 04/06/07

12	Village - Diglia Upazilla - Lohagara District - Narail.	Rape: A teenage Hindu girl (14) was raped by Araj Ali at a Namjhagha festival.	Sangbad 04/06/07 BHBCOP
13	Upazilla - Tala District - Satkhira.	Attack/Intimidation: 55 Christian families were attacked and threatened. Bishtu Sarker and Laxmi Sarker were seriously injured in this attack.	Pratam Alo 04/08/07 BHBCOP
14	Village - Bagadoba Upazilla - Madhupur District - Tangail.	Attack/Looting: The houses of Sabitri and Majena, two Tribal Garo women was attacked and looted.	Sangbad 04/08/07 BHBCOP
15	Dardari Upazilla - Lama District - Bandarban.	Murder: Tunu Mong (13) was brutally killed at the gate of Sunanda Bouddha Bihar by several men. Police later recovered her body.	Juganthar 04/10/07
16	Iliatganj Bazar Upazilla - Daudkandi District - Comilla.	Murder: Khokan Saha (38), a Hindu businessman, was brutally killed.	Janakantha 04/11/07
17	Digirpar Upazilla - Karaniganj District - Dhaka.	Murder: Ram Mondal (32) of Bithi Engineering was brutally killed. Police later recovered his body.	Juganthar 04/12/07 BHBCOP
18	Village - Betgair Upazilla - Sherpur District - Bagura.	Land-Grab: 8 Bighas of land owned by Dilip Kumar Sarker and Pranab Kumar Sarker, were occupied by a group of powerful men. The family members of Dilip and Pranab were forced to leave their house to save their lives. The local administration failed to take any action.	Ittafaq 04/12/07
19	Village - Ragunili Upazilla - Tadash District - Sirajganj.	Attack/Looting: The homes of Paritosh Sarker and Sudarshan Sarker were attacked by armed men, who also looted several valuables including gold ornaments.	Sangbad 04/12/07 BHBCOP
20	Village - Taktabunia Upazilla - Amtali District - Barguna.	Kidnapping/Gang-Rape: Raomala Sarker (16) was kidnapped and gang raped by 4 Muslim men.	Observer 04/17/07
21	Merul Tekpara P.S- Baddha	Attack: Ranjan Das (16), a Hindu businessman, was attacked by a group of Muslims, and seriously injured.	Juganthar 04/17/07

	Dhaka City.		BHBCOP
22	P.S- Kotowali Dhaka City.	Land-Grab: 150 year old property of the Dhaka Bhramma Samaj (socio-religious organization) was occupied by Sikder construction company. The local administration failed to take any action.	Ittafaq 04/17/07 BHBCOP
23	Village - Samarsingh Upazilla - Goarnadi District - Barishal.	Attack/Looting: The houses of Bimal Dafader and Paresh Nandi were attacked and several valuables, including gold ornaments were looted during the attack.	Samakal 04/18/07
24	Village - Ulipur Upazilla - Kalai District - Joypurhat.	Land-Grab: About 4 Bighas of Kali Thakurani temple property was occupied by a Muslim man, who built a house on the temple property.	Janakantha 04/19/07 BHBCOP
25	Village - Ranagati Upazilla - Abhoynagar District - Jessore.	Attack/Looting: The house of Aswani Biswas was attacked by 3-4 armed men, who looted several valuables, including gold ornaments.	Juganther 04/19/07
26	Upazilla - Sadar District - Noakhali.	Land-Grab/Temple Attack/Intimidation: Goddess Kali temple was illegally occupied and the land-grabbers threatened to kill the Hindu community. The local administration failed to take any action.	Bhore Kagoj 04/20/07 BHBCOP
27	Village - Dharishwar Upazilla - Nikli District - Kishoreganj.	Land-Grab/Temple Attack: A 100 year old temple was destroyed and the temple land was illegally occupied by a number of Muslim men, who also built a house on the land. The local administration failed to take any action.	Sangbad 04/22/07
28	Upazilla - Kaptai District - Rangamati.	Murder: Chitarmay Brajamohan (42), a Tribal man was brutally killed.	Ittafaq 04/22/07 BHBCOP
29	Village - Bagdokra Upazilla - Domar District - Nilphamari.	Attack/Looting: The house of Jagadish Chandra Singh, district representative of the Daily Independent, was attacked by 10 to 12 men, who also looted several valuables, including gold ornaments.	Sangbad 04/23/07
30	Upazilla - Maheshkhali District - Cox-x-Bazar.	Land-Grab/Intimidation: BNP leader and Chairman Shahidullah, and other Muslims threatened the Hindu Community to leave the country, and are trying to occupy the land/property of several Hindus.	Janakantha 04/24/07 BHBCOP

31	Upazilla - Keraniganj District - Dhaka.	Land-Grab: 5 Kathas of land owned by Nitai Chandra Barman was occupied by BNP members.	Ajker Kagoj 04/24/07 BHBCOP
32	Dabalchara Upazilla - Kamalganj District – Moulavibazar	Gang-Rape/Murder: A Teenage girl (17) of the Tribal Khasia community was gang raped to death by several men. Police later recovered her body.	Samakal 04/26/07
33	Malapara Upazilla - Kalai District - Joypurhat.	Attack: A Hindu housewife, named Shefali Mali Chintu, was attacked and seriously injured.	Pratam Alo 04/27/07 BHBCOP
34	P.S- Khilgaon Dhaka City	Kidnapping: Chanda Debnath, a student of class XI, was kidnapped.	Ittafaq 04/27/07
35	Village - Shibnagar Upazilla - Sadar District - Bhrammanbaria.	Rape: A teenage Hindu girl (16) was raped by a Muslim man named Taher Mia (45).	Samakal 04/28/07 BHBCOP
36	Village - Charkai Upazilla - Birampur District - Dinajpur.	Land-Grab: One Bigha of land owned by the Hindu Community was occupied by two Muslims men, who built a house on the property.	Ajker Kagoj 04/28/07
37	Village - Bura Majumder Upazilla - Betagi District - Barguna.	Land-Grab: A canal and road of 15 Hindu families was occupied by a Muslim man named Sultan Howlader. The local administration failed to take any action.	BHBCOP
38	Village - Kazipur District - Sirajganj.	Temple Attack: Two Hindu temples, a Durga temple and a Kali temple were destroyed by the local administration.	BHBCOP
39	Village - Semda Upazilla - Sadar District - Bhrammanbaria.	Land-Grab: A crematorium ground of the Hindu Community was illegally occupied by several Muslims. Local administration did not take any action.	BHBCOP
40	Village - Shaildaha Upazilla - Chitalmari	Attack/Land-Grab/Looting: The house of Bidhan Chandra Baidya was attacked and looted, and then illegally occupied.	BHBCOP

	District - Bagerhat.		
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	Incident Location	May Human Rights Abuse	Source
1	Village - Golgalia Upazilla - Belabo District - Narsingdi.	Land-Grab/Intimidation: 64 Bighas of land owned by Ranjit Chandra Malaker and Pradip Chandra Malaker were occupied by several Muslim men, who also threatened to kill them.	Ittafaq 05/01/07 BHBCOP
2	Village - Islampur Upazilla - Nikli Kishoregaon.	Land-Grab/Intimidation: Several Muslims threatened Roy Kishori Saha (56) in order to occupy her property.	Pratom Alo 05/01/07 BHBCOP
3	Shohardhi Uddan Shababag Dhaka City	Attack/Looting: 3 Lakh Taka was looted from Pradip Kumar Ghose, who was also seriously injured in the attack.	Pratom Alo 05/01/07
4	Radhakhali Brize Upazilla - Belabo District - Narsingdi.	Murder: A Hindu man named Ranjit (28) was brutally killed. Police later recovered his body in the Radhakhali Brize.	Juganthar 05/03/07
5	Kutab Bazar Upazilla - Mirjapur District - Tangail.	Kidnapping: A Hindu businessman named Arabindhu Saha (42) was kidnapped.	Pratom Alo 05/04/07
6	Rajiyar Bazar Upazilla - Agailzara District - Barishal.	Attack: Biren Chandra Das (28), a gold businessman was attacked seriously injured.	Janakantha 05/05/07 BHBCOP
7	Village - Indrapur Upazilla - Sadar District - Laxmipur.	Land-Grab: 2 Muslims are trying to occupy the land/property of Narayan Debnath.	Bhorer Kagoj 05/05/07
8	Upazilla - Sadar District - Patuakhali.	Attack: Nikhil Chatterjee, a representative of the Daily Sangbad and Meghnath Chandra Saha of the Daily Janata were attacked by 10 armed men and seriously injured.	Daily Star 05/05/07 BHBCOP

9	Village - Bakar Upazilla - Agailzara District - Barishal.	Land-Grab: The land/property of Kalayani Rani Chatterjee, wife of the late Freedom Fighter Surendra Nath Chatterjee, was occupied by the local Upazilla administration as Vested Property.	Sangbad 05/05/07 BHBCOP
10	Village - Sadishpur Upazilla - Badalgachi District - Nougaoon.	Looting: Two cows owned by a Hindu family were looted by several Muslims.	Sangbad 05/05/07
11	Asadganj Chittagong City	Attack/Looting: The house of Swapan Datta was attacked by 10 to 12 armed men, who also looted several valuables, including gold ornaments.	Ajker Kagoj 05/06/07 BHBCOP
12	Village - Halaba Upazilla - Barkal District - Rangamati.	Kidnapping: Shyam Ranjan Chakma (42) and Debapriya Chakma (50) were kidnapped by armed men.	Observer 05/06/07
13	Nathpara Upazilla - Melandaha District - Jamalpur.	Kidnapping/Torture: 3 young Suiper girls were kidnapped by several Muslims led by Dider Pasha, Chairman Melandaha Poursava and BNP leader. The girls were also tortured.	Bhorer Kagoj 05/06/07 BHBCOP
14	Kajirbag Upazilla - Sadar District - Feni.	Land-Grab/Intimidation: The land/property of 20 Hindu families was occupied by a group of Muslims led by Jasimuddin, Chairman, Kajirbag Union Council. They threatened to kill the family members of one of the Hindu land owners.	Janakantha 05/07/07 BHBCOP
15	Village - Balakdia Upazilla - Sadar District - Jhalakathi.	Attack/Land-Grab: 3 Hindu families were attacked and their property was illegally occupied. Hindu women of the affected families were tortured.	Ajker Kagoj 05/09/07
16	Dania P.S- Shyampur Dhaka City	Torture/Intimidation: Rina Bala committed suicide by hanging herself after she was tortured by several miscreants. The miscreants also threatened to kill the members of Rina Bala's family.	Bhorer Kagoj 05/10/07 BHBCOP
17	Village - Ranigaon Upazilla - Nalitabari District - Sherpur.	Land-Grab/Intimidation: About 51 Bihgas of land owned by a Hindu family was occupied by several Muslims, who also threatened to kill the Hindu family members.	Samakal 05/10/07
18	Village - Kujail Upazilla - Raninagar	Rape: A young Christian woman was raped in the Nidds International Primary School.	Janakantha 05/13/07

	District - Nougao.		BHBCOP
19	Jaduyardanga Upazilla - Ashashuni District - Satkhira.	Land-Grab: 5 Shrimp cultivations owned by the Hindu Community were occupied by several Muslim men. Two Hindu families fled the country to save their lives.	Sangbad 05/13/07
20	Dasher Hatchara Upazilla - Sadar District - Kurigram.	Attack/Looting: The house of Harish Chandra, President local fish project, was attacked and looted. Many Hindu fishermen were seriously injured in this attack.	Janakantha 05/14/07 BHBCOP
21	Village - Barenga Upazilla - Keshabpur District - Jessore.	Attack/Looting: The houses of Ranjan Das, Chaitannya Das and Bishwanath Das were attacked and looted by several Muslims. 10 to 12 Hindus were seriously injured in the attack.	Janakantha 05/15/07 BHBCOP
22	Baunia Dhaka City	Land-Grab/Temple Attack: Several men are trying to illegally occupy a 100 year old Goddess Kali temple.	Bhorer Kagoj 05/15/07 BHBCOP
23	Village -Lalchandrapur Upazilla - Fakirhat District - Bagerhat.	Attack/Looting: The houses of several Hindus were attacked and looted by men led by BNP leader Sheikh Anwar Hossain Anu. Kabita Rani (43), Shipu Rani (37), Nirmal Dev (42), Kali Rani, Sushil and Nikhil Dev were seriously injured in this attack.	Janakantha 05/16/07 BHBCOP
24	Village - Goalkhali Upazilla - Sirajdikhan Munshiganj	Attack/Looting: 5 Hindu houses were attack and looted by armed miscreants.	Samakal 05/17/07 BHBCOP
25	Village - Dushumi Upazilla - Agailzara District – Barishal	Attack/Kidnapping: Namita Ballab was kidnapped by several Muslims, who also attacked numerous Hindu homes. 25 Hindu family members left the homes to save their lives.	Sangbad 05/20/07 BHBCOP
26	Village - Durgapur Upazilla - Aditmari Lalmanirhat	Attack/Looting: The shop of a Hindu businessman named Bishnu Barman was attacked and looted.	Observer 05/20/07
27	Upazilla - Sadar District - Madaripur.	Land-Grab/Temple Attack: Temple property of the 140 old traditional Shree Shree Kali Temple was occupied by a number of Muslims led by Abdur Rashid.	Janakantha 05/20/07

28	Upazilla - Debidwar District - Comilla.	Attack/Looting: 20 Hindu homes in four villages were attacked, and several valuables were looted, including gold ornaments. 3 Hindus, Sajal Dev (30), Narayan Dev (32) and Bikash Dev (28) were seriously injured in this attack.	Ajker Kagoj 05/20/07
29	Sarkerpara Upazilla - Rowjan District -Chittagong.	Attack/Looting: The homes of 2 Hindus, Subode Biswas and Swapan Biswas were attacked by armed men, who also looted many valuables including gold ornaments. Swapan Biswas, Subode Biswas, Gita Biswas and Jhoshna Biswas were seriously injured in this attack.	Ajker Kagoj 05/20/07 BHBCOP
30	Hussaintala Upazilla - Muradnagar District - Comilla.	Kidnapping: Sumi Rani Saha (14), a Hindu girl and student of Kompaniganj Badiul Alam High School was kidnapped by a group of Muslims led by Manik Mia.	Ajker Kagoj 05/21/07
31	Village - Suyapur P.S- Dhamrai District – Dhaka	Land-Grab/Temple Attack: The Temple property of Suyapur Sarbajaneen Durga Temple was occupied by Engineer Abdul Khaleque and Chenu Mia.	Juganthar 05/21/07 BHBCOP
32	Village - Chirulia Upazilla - Sadar District – Bagerhat	Land-Grab/Intimidation: The land of a Hindu school teacher named Sudir Kumar Chakraborty was occupied by a group of men led by a Muslim Professor Mobasher Hossain. The men also threatened Sudir to leave the country.	Sangbad 05/21/07
33	Purana Bazar Road Upazilla - Sadar District – Gopalganj	Kidnapping/Murder: A Hindu housewife, Sabita Saha (23), was kidnapped and brutally killed. Police later recovered her body.	Sangbad 05/22/07 BHBCOP
34	Shibrampur District - Faridpur	Attack/Looting/Arson/Intimidation: The house of Bipul Ghose was attacked, set on fire and looted. The attackers also threatened to kill him.	Ittafaq 05/22/07
35	Ban Khalishakhali Upazilla - Sadar District – Narail	Murder: Nakul Biswas (55) was brutally killed. Police later recovered his body.	Ittafaq 05/23/07 BHBCOP
36	Maizdi Bazar Upa- Sadar Dist- Noakhali.	Temple Attack/Arson: Shree Shree Gopal Jiew Temple was attacked and set on fire by Muslim fundamentalists.	Ajker Kagoj 05/23/07
37	Bhowyal Mirja Gram, Upazilla - Sadar	Attack/Land-Grab: 5 homes of the Rabidas Para were occupied by men led by Yajadur Rahman, Chairman of the local Union. Many members of the	Ajker Kagoj 05/24/07

	District – Gazipur	Rabidas community were seriously injured in the attack.	BHBCOP
38	North Tatalbari Upazilla -Sharankhola District – Bagerhat	Land-Grab: The property of Ashotosh Halder was occupied by a group of people led by a BNP leader, Majibar Khalifa.	Sangbad 05/25/07 BHBCOP
39	Halir Road Upazilla - Sadar District – Nilphamari	Attack/Looting: Bhuiya Das was attacked and looted. He was seriously injured in the attack.	Ajker Kagoj 05/25/07
40	Upazilla - Anwara District – Chittagong	Kidnapping: Baishakhi Sarker (14), a Hindu student of class X of Singhra Ramkanai High School was kidnapped.	Juganthar 05/25/07 BHBCOP
41	Panchandar Upazilla - Tanore District – Rajshahi	Land-Grab: 3 Bighas of land of a Tribal was occupied by Golam Rabbani, Chairman Panchandar Union Council.	BHBCOP
42	Cox-x-Bazar	Land-Grab: About 120 Bighas of land of the Tribal Rakhain community were occupied by the powerful land-grabbers.	BHBCOP

	Incident Location	<p>June</p> <p>Human Rights Abuse</p>	Source
1	Rajnagar Upazilla - Kulaura District – Moulabibazar	Attack/Land-Grab: The house of Nirendra Malaker was attacked by 8 Muslim men trying to occupy the home. Ratna Malaker (22) and Kalpana Malaker (20) were seriously injured in this attack, and the attackers threatened to kidnap them.	Pratom Alo 06/01/07 BHBCOP
2	Bhowyal Mirjapur District – Gazipur	Attack/Land-Grab: The homes of Bachiya Rabidas and Kamal Rani of the Rabidas community were attacked by 60 to 70 Muslim men led by Union Council Member, Hasna Hena, and Ex-member Sirajuddin, in order to occupy their homes and land. Many of the Rabidas community, including Anjali Rani were seriously injured in the attack.	Pratom Alo 06/04/07 BHBCOP

3	Sonarparti Upazilla - Sadar District – Nougao	Attack/Looting/Murder: Rama Jewelry owned by Prabir Kumar was attacked and gold ornaments were looted. A man named Lebu (28) was brutally killed by the attackers in the gold shop.	Observer 06/04/07
4	East Narayanpur Mohammedpur District – Magura	Land-Grab: The land of Ram Gopal Chakraborty was occupied with the help of the local land office.	Sangbad 06/05/07 BHBCOP
5	Ramdia Upazilla - Kashiani District – Gopalganj	Kidnapping/Murder: Sushil Bala (19) was kidnapped and brutally killed. Police later recovered his body from the Kashiani Dhusur Brize.	Sangbad 06/08/07
6	Hetalbunia Upazilla - Batiyaghata District – Khulna	Murder: Ramendranath Majumder (36), a Hindu teacher of Batiyaghata Khagendranth Women College was brutally killed. Police later recovered his body from the Betalbunia Crematorium.	Samakal 06/07/07 BHBCOP
7	West Alonia Upazilla - Faridgonj District – Chandpur	Murder: A Kabiraj named Arjun Chandra Roy was brutally killed.	Pratom Alo 06/09/07
8	Village - Shaligram Upazilla - Patnitala District - Nougao	Land-Grab/Intimidation: The land and garden of Goutam Ghose was occupied by a group of men led by Ansar Ali, brother-in-law of Ex BNP M.P Shamsuzoha Khan. They also threatened to kill Goutam Ghose. Local police and administration failed to take any action.	Janakantha 06/09/07 BHBCOP
9	Kalibari Road Upazilla - Sadar District – Barishal	Land-Grab/Intimidation: The Temple property of Shree Shree Durga, Shiba and Jagatdwatri was occupied by a Muslim man, who also threatened to evict a Hindu family.	Ajker Kagoj 06/10/07 BHBCOP
10	Upazilla - Sadar District – Rangpur	Kidnapping: A teenage Hindu girl (13) was kidnapped.	BHBCOP
11	Talaram Road Upazilla - Sadar District –Narayangonj	Attack: Paltu Chandra (24) was attacked by 3-4 armed men. He was seriously injured in this attack.	Bhorerkagoj 06/10/07 BHBCOP
12	Village - Kashibari Upazilla - Shymnagar District – Satkhira	Kidnapping: 4 Hindu female students, including Mallika Sarker, were kidnapped.	Ittafaq 06/11/07 BHBCOP

13	Village - Jabra Upazilla - Ghior District – Manikgonj	Attack: The house of Asoke Kumar Das was attacked by two Muslim men, Ziaul Haq Zia and Babul Mia. They also tried to kidnap Asoke's daughter, Dali Das, a student of class viii. She was seriously injured in this attack.	Janakantha 06/11/07
14	Chakma Union Upazilla - Ramu District - Cox-x-Bazar	Kidnapping: A teenage Hindu girl was kidnapped by 7 Muslim men led by Ramzan Ali.	Pratom Alo 06/11/07 BHBCOP
15	Village - Dachibunia Upazilla - Batiyaghata District – Khulna	Attack/Looting: The house of Samiran was attacked, and several valuables were looted, including gold ornaments. Family members of Samiran were seriously injured in the attack.	Juganthar 06/11/07
16	Village - Mainpur Upazilla - Sadar District – Jamalpur	Land-Grab: A 125 year old crematorium ground of the Tribal Coach Community was occupied by land-grabbers. The local administration did not take any action.	Sangbad 06/10/07 BHBCOP
17	Village - Charidron Upazilla - Senbagh District – Noakhali	Attack/Looting: The house of Malati Rani (50) was attacked and looted by 15 to 20 miscreants. Malati Rani and her son Tapash were seriously injured in the attack.	Ajker Kagoj 06/14/07
18	Village - Garibpur Upazilla - Chitalmari District – Bagerhat	Murder: Hemantha Gaine (48) was brutally killed by 7 to 8 men.	Juganthar 06/15/07
19	Village - Chipatali Upazilla - Rowjan District – Chittagong	Attack/Looting: The house of Prakash Barua, Dipan Barua and Asit Barua were attacked and looted by armed men. Many were seriously injured in the attack.	Bhorerkagoj 06/15/07 BHBCOP
20	Nandan Pratab Upazilla - Dighalia District – Khulna	Attack/Looting: The homes of Ashotosh Basak, Bankim Basak and Swarbeswar Basak were attacked and looted by 8 to 10 armed men. Many Hindus, including Golak Biswas, were seriously injured in the attack.	Ajker Kagoj 06/16/07
21	Hatgopalpur Upazilla - Jhinaidah District – Jessore	Attack/Kidnapping/Looting: Thakur Kishore Sammauna of Hamdah Kali Temple was kidnapped by armed men. They looted valuables worth Taka 18,000 from Kishore. He was seriously injured in the attack.	Janakantha 06/16/07 BHBCOP
22	Village - Bazarhat Upazilla - Shahjampur District – Sirajgonj	Attack/Looting: A Hindu businessman named Balaram Chandra Roy was attacked, and looted of about Tk. 75,000. He was seriously injured in this attack.	Sangbad 06/17/07

23	Karim Super Market Sadar, Rajbari	Attack/Looting: Rajlaxmi, a gold shop owned by Joydeb Sarker was attacked and looted.	Bhorerkagoj 06/17/07 BHBCOP
24	Upazilla - Lohagara District – Narail	Attack: A group of men led by Hanif Gazi (20) tried to kill a Hindu Principal, Biswanath Chakraborty (40), of Itna school and college. He was seriously injured in the attack.	Ajker Kagoj 06/17/07 BHBCOP
25	Village - Yunaikhara Upazilla - Singda District – Natore	Attack/Looting: The homes of Nirmal Sarker and Gour Sarker were attacked and looted by armed men. Several Hindus were seriously injured in the attacked including a 13 year old boy.	Bhorerkagoj 06/17/07 BHBCOP
26	Dhapadanga Upazilla - Boalmari District – Faridpur	Attack/Looting: The house of a Hindu, Bankim Saha was attacked and looted. Bankim Saha and another man, Goutam were seriously injured in the attack.	Samakal 06/17/07
27	Village - Shrerampur Upazilla - Ramganj District – Laxmipur	Attack/Looting: The house of Dr. Kamini was attacked and looted by armed men. 3 Hindus were seriously injured in the attack.	Juganthar 06/18/07 BHBCOP
28	Village - Sagardi Upazilla - Monohardi District – Narsingdi	Attack/Looting: The house of advocate Umesh was attacked and looted. Pranesh Saha was seriously injured in the attack.	Juganthar 06/18/07
29	Ward No- 04 Upazilla - Sadar District – Bhola	Attack/Looting: The house of Abala Rani was attacked and looted by a Muslim man, who tried to rape her teenage daughter.	Janakantha 06/19/07 BHBCOP
30	Girls School Road Tangibazar District – Gazipur	Attack: A Hindu man named Uttam Kumar Basak was attacked and seriously injured.	Ajker Kagoj 06/20/07
31	Ashuganj Railway Station Bhrammanbaria	Murder: A Hindu man named Jitendra Sarker was brutally killed. Police later recovered his body.	Juganthar 06/19/07
32	Village - Mochara Upazilla - Akhaura Bhrammanbaria	Murder: A Hindu man named Gopal Sarker (60) was brutally killed.	Samakal 06/21/07 BHBCOP

33	Supertala Upazilla - Biyanibazar District – Sunamgonj	Temple Attack/Looting: 3 sacred Hindu images of Shalagram, one image of God Ganesha and two other images of Deities in the Basudeb temple were looted.	Ajker Kagoj 06/22/07 BHBCOP
34	Shahajahanpur Upazilla - Madhabpur District – Habigonj	Attack/Looting: A Hindu home was attacked and looted by 15 to 20 men. 10 Hindus including 5 women were seriously injured in the attack.	Samakal 06/22/07
35	Gazalia Upazilla - Lama District -Bandarban	Attack/Land-Grab/Looting: The house of Babul Kumar Saha was attacked and looted by a number of Muslims led by Ranjita Begum and Abul Kalam Azad, a local BNP leader. They occupied 12 Bighas of land owned by Babul Saha, and threatened Babul. Babul and his wife Gita Rani Saha were seriously injured in the attack.	Sangbad 06/23/07 BHBCOP
36	Village - Ayshar Upazilla - Kalkini District – Madaripur	Land-Grab/Intimidation: The house and property of Kalidash Podder were occupied by 6 Muslim men. They threatened Kalidash to leave the country, and he fled to save his life.	Janakantha 06/24/07
37	Satgoan Tea Garden Upazilla - Shremongal Moulabibazar	Attack/Looting: The house of Tilababu Janmayjoy Dhar was attacked and looted by 20 to 25 armed men.	Bhorerkagoj 06/25/07 BHBCOP
38	Upazilla - Jamalganj District – Sunamgonj	Attack/Gang-Rape/Looting: Hindu populated area of Beheli Union was attacked by several Muslim men, who looted several valuables. Many Hindu women and teenage girls were gang raped by the attackers. Several Hindus were injured in the attack, and many of them fled the area to save their lives.	Ajker Kagoj 06/23/07
39	Upazilla - Bhanga District – Faridpur	Attack/Intimidation: Dilip Das, a Hindu teacher at Bhanga women college and representative of the daily Sangbad, was attacked. They also threatened to kill him.	Pratom Alo 06/24/07 BHBCOP
40	Village - Mahakal Upazilla - Abhaynagar District – Jessore	Land-Grab: The property of Durga Rani was occupied by land-grabbers. The local administration did not take any action.	Ajker Kagoj 06/26/07
41	Village - Karimpur Upazilla - Bagarpara District – Jessore	Kidnapping/Murder: A Hindu named Prashanta Saha was kidnapped and brutally killed. Police later recovered his body.	Ajker Kagoj 06/24/07 BHBCOP

42	Village - Kolagram Upazilla - Sirajdikhan District –Munshigonj	Rape: A Hindu teenage girl was raped by Jahangir Howlader (40), the younger brother of Mobarak Hossain Howlader, Chairman Union Parishad. Police failed to take any action.	Janakantha 06/26/07 BHBCOP
43	Hilchiya Upazilla - Bajidpur District – Kishoregonj	Kidnapping: A Hindu businessman named Sunil Saha (65) was kidnapped for ransom.	Pratom Alo 06/28/07 BHBCOP
44	Upazilla - Fakirhat District – Bagerhat	Murder: A Hindu named Nani Gopal Mistri (25) was brutally killed. Police later recovered his body.	Juganthar 06/30/07
45	Village - Baneswar Upazilla - Dhamrai District – Dhaka	Attack/Gang-Rape: The house of Gobinda Sannashi was attacked, and Gobinda's daughters Sandya and China were gang raped by the attackers. They also tried to kidnap the girls and threatened Gobinda. Subsequently, Gobinda fled his house in order to save his life. Police failed to take any action.	Samakal 06/30/07 BHBCOP
46	Village - Ziapur Upazilla - Jakiganj District – Sylhet	Murder: Anil Chandra Das, a former teacher at Manikganj Govt. Primary School was brutally killed.	BHBCOP
47	Village - Mirabazar Upazilla - Sadar District – Sylhet	Land-Grab/Temple Attack: Temple property of Kancha Thakur Temple was attacked by a group of men trying to occupy the land. The temple was also destroyed.	BHBCOP
48	Village - Pirojepur Upazilla - Sadar District – Meherpur	Land-Grab/Temple Attack: The land/property of Bindaban Pal was occupied by land-grabbers. The Temple on the property is being destroyed by the illegal occupiers.	BHBCOP
49	Upazilla - Sadar District – Kurigram	Attack/Gang-Rape: Members of the Fishermen community were attacked and a house wife was gang raped by a group of attackers.	BHBCOP
50	Gangarhat Upazilla - Sadar District – Kurigram	Land-Grab: One Bigha of land owned by Bahadur Chandra Rabidas was occupied by Gangarhat Dakhil Madrasha (Muslim seminary).	BHBCOP
51	Village - Baniapara Upazilla - Palashbari District - Kurigram.	Kidnapping: Sonali Kumar was kidnapped by a group of men.	BHBCOP

52	Village - Boalbir Upazilla - Sadar District – Kurigram	Kidnapping: Kamini Rani (13), student of class vii, was kidnapped by a group of attackers.	BHBCOP
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